Cooking Light®

DECEMBER 2009

SPECIAL
DOUBLE HOLIDAY ISSUE

292
PAGES OF

- HEALTHY TREATS
- TIME-SAVING MENUS & ENTRÉES
- SEASONAL INSPIRATIONS

HOLIDAY COOKIES p. 250

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VOLUME 23 NUMBER 11

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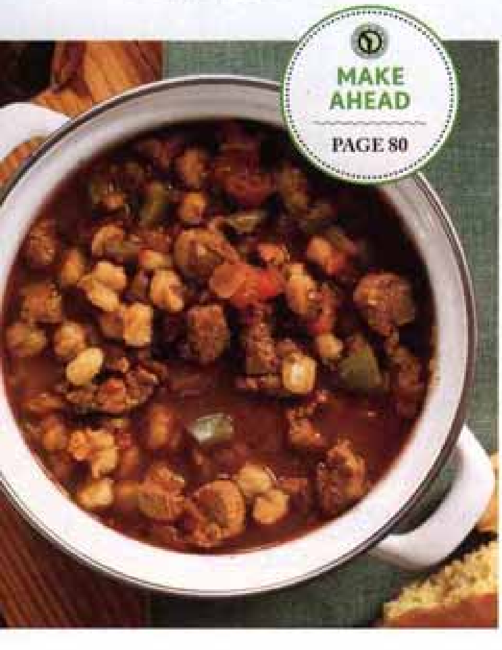

Staff raves Our highest-rated recipes in this issue

Mushroom and Roasted Pepper Tarts (p. 98)
"This pretty vegetarian option delivers big flavor."
—Julianna Grimes, Associate Food Editor

Slow-Roasted Brown Sugar and Dill Cured Salmon (p. 191)
"The fish transforms into buttery deliciousness."
—Kathy Kitchens Downie, Associate Food Editor

Lamb Shanks Braised with Tomato (p. 274)
"I'd serve this to my Italian grandmother, if I had one."
—Scott Mowbray, Editor

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EVEN MORE ONLINE!
Our favorite recipes from 2009
CookingLight.com/features

The Editor's Dozen

12 things (and a bonus) in the mix for a great DECEMBER

1 Brighten your table

Festive without being over-the-top: vibrant red felt place mats with a cutaway floral motif ($6; kikkerland.com).

2 Smells good, does good

Branches of fresh olive are interwoven with fragrant bay and eucalyptus in Lindsay Olives' holiday wreath. Over time, it will dry to a beautiful silvery green. Proceeds from their sale benefit Meals on Wheels ($35/14-inch wreath, $40/18-inch wreath; lindsayolives.com).

3 SERVE WITH A SMILE

THE ONLY GENUINELY FUNNY CAKE SERVER WE'VE EVER SEEN ($23; ZIPPERGIFTS.COM).

4 Lunch boxes for grown-ups

Thoughtfully designed Koko nylon lunch totes are fully insulated with an easy-to-wipe-clean interior. They're cute, too. From left: Jenn, Kate, and Sadie bags ($20 to $25; cosmoda.com).

5
Flatware for future foodies

Scaled down for smaller hands but not cloyingly styled, WMF's stainless steel Knuddel pattern will look right at home on an adult's tabletop ($40; wmf.com).

6
National Geographic's big food book

Think of *Food Journeys of a Lifetime* as 500 places to see and taste before you die. Full of the take-you-there photography for which National Geographic is famous, the book covers every conceivable gustatory delight—from fabled chefs' fare to humble street foods ($40; National Geographic Books).

7
MAKE FLAVORS BLOOM

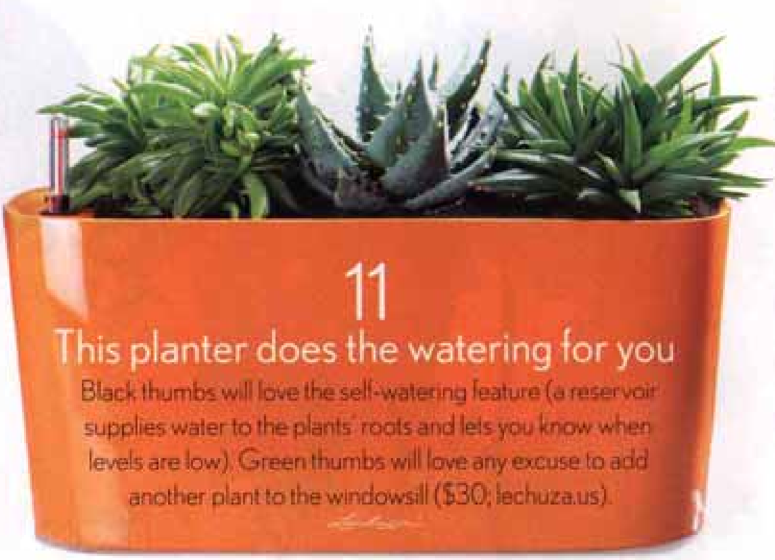
FROM SMOKED HAWAIIAN TO BLACK TURKISH, THESE FINISHING SALTS WAKE UP THE PALATE

($24/SAMPLER SET OF 6 1-OZ. TINS; ATTHEMEADOW.COM).

8
These jewels are in season

Antioxidant-rich pomegranates are a bit fussy but worth it—superbly tart, crunchy, juicy, and gorgeous.

The Editor's Dozen

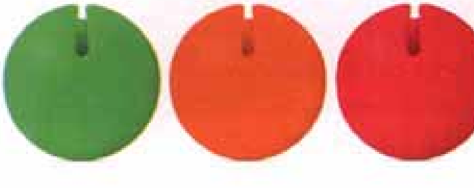


11
This planter does the watering for you
Black thumbs will love the self-watering feature (a reservoir supplies water to the plants' roots and lets you know when levels are low). Green thumbs will love any excuse to add another plant to the windowsill ($30; lechuza.us).

9
Dress your tree with a hoagie
Just one of the many charming designs from Ornaments to Remember. Proceeds benefit The Learning Community ($22 and up; ornaments2 remember.com).

10
PRO BAKEWARE, PRO RESULTS
THE PEBBLED ALUMINUM SURFACE HELPS YOUR BAKED GOODS BROWN AND CRISP BEAUTIFULLY ($50/SET OF 3; DOUGHMAKERS.COM).

12
For the root beer connoisseur
This collection includes one bottle each of regional root beer specialties from Berghoff, Boylan, Dog N Suds, Faygo, Fitz's, and Sprecher. Pour yourself a flight, or just add reduced-fat vanilla ice cream for floats ($35; foodsacross america.com).



extra! PREVENT IPOD ACCIDENTS
Dangling earphone cords are a hassle or, worse, a danger when you're using exercise equipment. Wrap excess cords around one of these Magneat clips, which magnetically attach to clothing without harm ($13, magneat.com).

SuperFast

CookingLight.com/superfast

EASY 20 MINUTE ENTRÉES

This month: Asian flavors

Enjoy the sweet, salty, spicy, and sour tastes typical of this colorful cuisine in dishes you can whip up in a flash.

BY BRUCE WEINSTEIN AND MARK SCARBROUGH

Mongolian Beef

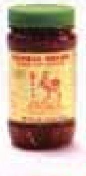
Serve this slightly spicy dish over wide rice noodles to catch all the garlic- and ginger-laced sauce.

2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon cornstarch
2 teaspoons dry sherry
2 teaspoons hoisin sauce
1 teaspoon rice vinegar
1 teaspoon chile paste with garlic
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons peanut oil
1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger
1 tablespoon minced fresh garlic
1 pound sirloin steak, thinly sliced across the grain
16 medium green onions, cut into 2-inch pieces

1. Combine first 8 ingredients, stirring until smooth.
2. Heat peanut oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add minced ginger, minced garlic, and beef; sauté for 2 minutes or until beef is browned. Add green onion pieces; sauté 30 seconds. Add soy sauce mixture; cook 1 minute or until thickened, stirring constantly. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 1 cup).

CALORIES 237; **FAT** 10.5g (sat 3.5g, mono 4.3g, poly 1.1g); **PROTEIN** 26g; **CARB** 9.1g; **FIBER** 1.7g; **CHOL** 60mg; **IRON** 2.7mg; **SODIUM** 517mg; **CALC** 67mg

4 INGREDIENTS FOR BIG, BOLD, FAR-EAST FLAVOR



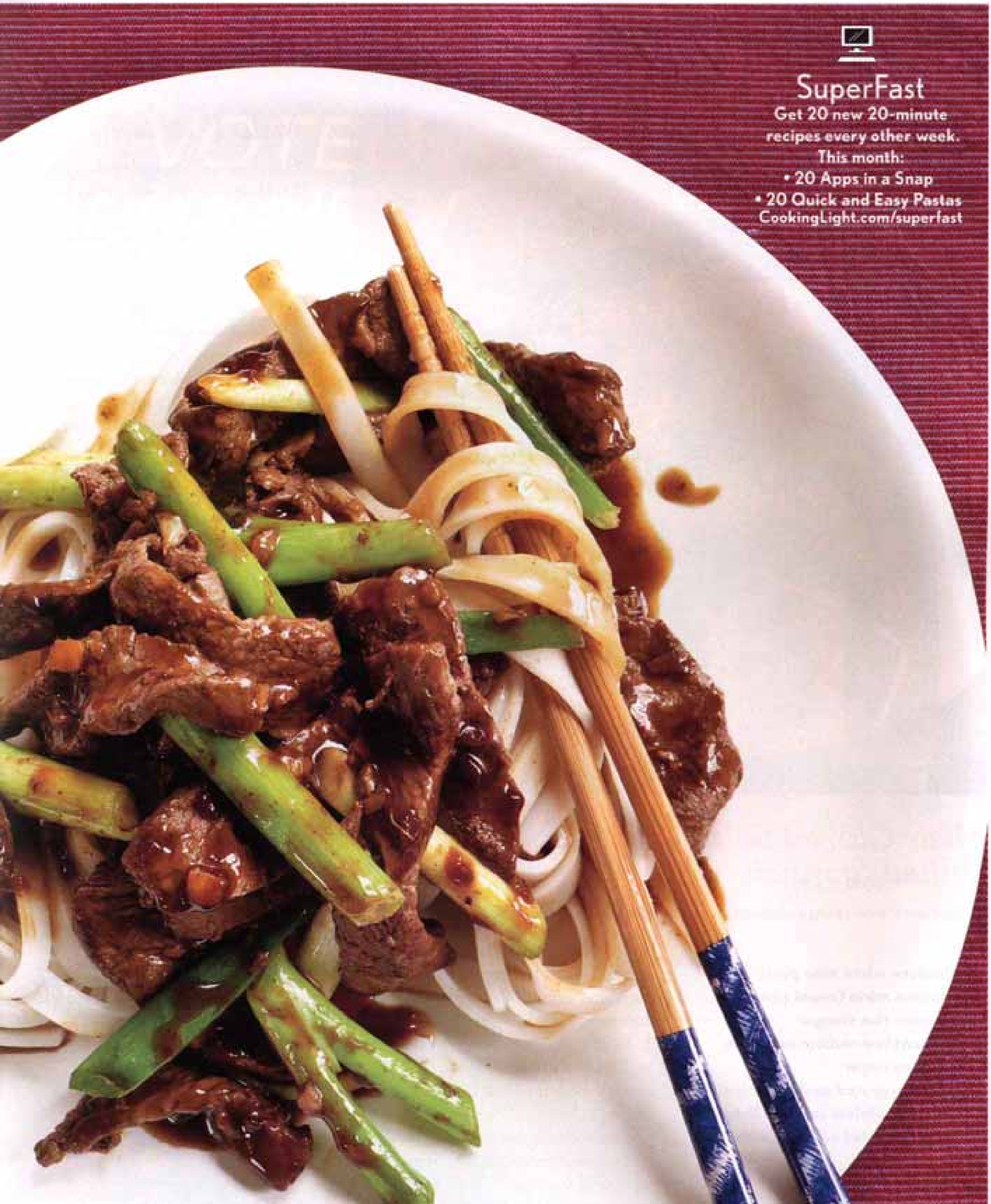
CHILE PASTE WITH GARLIC
Boosts taste with a fiery, savory hit

FRESH GINGER
Brings spicy, slightly sweet nuances

LOW-SODIUM SOY SAUCE
Gives rich and meaty flavor

GREEN ONIONS
Offer color and crunch

PHOTOGRAPHY: RANDY MAYOR; STYLING: LEIGH ANN ROSS; FOOD STYLING: KELLIE GERBER KELLEY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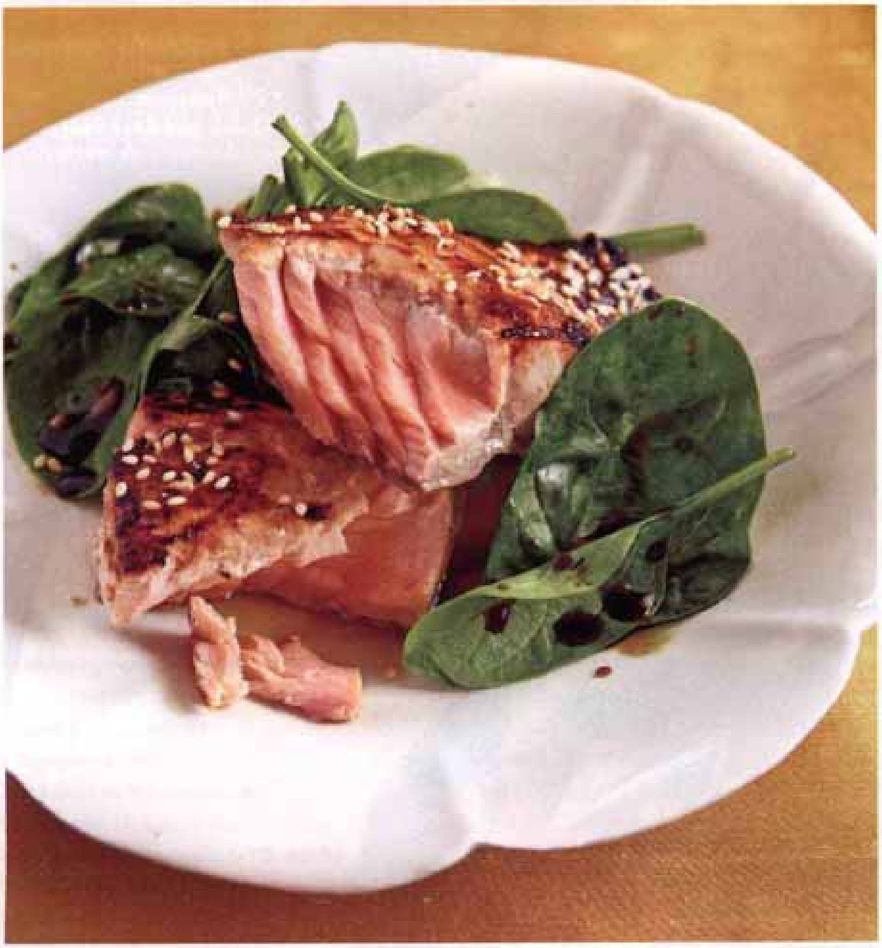


Miso-Glazed Salmon with Wilted Spinach

Look for jars of time-saving pretoasted sesame seeds in the spice aisle.

Fish:

1 tablespoon white miso paste
2 teaspoons mirin (sweet rice wine)
2 teaspoons rice vinegar
2 teaspoons low-sodium soy sauce
½ teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon grated peeled fresh ginger
2 (6-ounce) skinless salmon fillets
1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds

Spinach:

2 teaspoons dark sesame oil
1 teaspoon bottled minced garlic
1 (10-ounce) package fresh spinach
2 teaspoons low-sodium soy sauce

1. Preheat broiler.
2. To prepare fish, combine the first 6 ingredients in a small bowl, and brush evenly over fish. Arrange fish on a foil-lined baking sheet; broil for 8 minutes or until desired degree of doneness. Sprinkle with sesame seeds.
3. To prepare spinach, while fish broils, heat sesame oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and spinach to skillet; cook 30 seconds or until spinach just begins to wilt, tossing mixture constantly. Stir in 2 teaspoons soy sauce. Yield: 2 servings (serving size: 1 fillet and about ¾ cup spinach mixture).

CALORIES 347; **FAT** 16.5g (sat 3.3g, mono 6.9g, poly 5.1g); **PROTEIN** 37.5g; **CARB** 12.6g; **FIBER** 4.9g; **CHOL** 80mg; **IRON** 5.3mg; **SODIUM** 805mg; **CALC** 175mg

Mao Pao Tofu

1 (3½-ounce) bag boil-in-bag rice
2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce, divided
2 tablespoons dry sherry, divided
½ pound lean ground pork
1 tablespoon peanut oil
1 (14-ounce) package extra-firm tofu, drained and cubed
3 tablespoons chopped green onions
1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
1 tablespoon chile paste with garlic
2 teaspoons minced fresh garlic
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 tablespoon water

1. Cook rice according to directions.
2. Combine 1 tablespoon soy sauce, 1 tablespoon sherry, and pork; set aside.
3. Heat oil in a wok over high heat. Add tofu; stir-fry 3 minutes. Add pork mixture; stir-fry 3 minutes. Stir in onions and next 4 ingredients; stir-fry 30 seconds. Add 1 tablespoon soy sauce, 1 tablespoon sherry, and broth; cook 2 minutes. Combine cornstarch and water; stir with a whisk. Add to wok; cook 30 seconds or until slightly thick, stirring constantly. Serve over rice. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 1¼ cups tofu mixture and ½ cup rice).

CALORIES 342; **FAT** 14.3g (sat 3.8g, mono 2.7g, poly 4.6g); **PROTEIN** 23.3g; **CARB** 27.8g; **FIBER** 0.3g; **CHOL** 43mg; **IRON** 2.3mg; **SODIUM** 562mg; **CALC** 78mg

Asian Chicken Salad

2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons sliced almonds
1 (5-ounce) package Japanese curly noodles (chucka soba), crumbled
2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
1½ tablespoons rice vinegar
1 tablespoon dark sesame oil
1 tablespoon honey
1 teaspoon Chinese mustard
1 teaspoon bottled ground fresh ginger
½ teaspoon chile paste with garlic
4 cups thinly sliced napa cabbage
2 cups thinly sliced red cabbage
2 cups coarsely chopped skinless, boneless rotisserie chicken breast
½ cup torn fresh cilantro leaves
1 cup jarred fresh orange sections, drained

1. Melt butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add almonds; sauté 1 minute. Add noodles; sauté 3 minutes or until almonds and noodles are toasted. Set aside.

2. Combine soy sauce and next 6 ingredients (through chile paste) in a large bowl, stirring with a whisk. Add cabbages, chicken, and cilantro; toss gently to coat. Top with oranges and almond mixture. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: about 2 cups).

CALORIES 407; **FAT** 13.9g (sat 5g, mono 4.7g, poly 2.6g); **PROTEIN** 29.2g; **CARB** 42.5g; **FIBER** 3.6g; **CHOL** 75mg; **IRON** 1.6mg; **SODIUM** 484mg; **CALC** 117mg

Cold Peanut Noodles with Shrimp

The noodles absorb the sauce quickly, so serve shortly after tossing all the ingredients together. If you can't find fresh Chinese egg noodles, substitute spaghetti or linguine.

1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
2 tablespoons rice vinegar
2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
2 tablespoons creamy peanut butter
1 tablespoon dark sesame oil
1 teaspoon bottled ground fresh ginger
1 teaspoon chile paste with garlic
¼ teaspoon salt
1 garlic clove, minced
12 ounces fresh Chinese egg noodles
1 cup matchstick-cut carrots
8 ounces peeled and deveined medium shrimp
1½ cups julienne-cut red bell pepper
½ cup thinly sliced green onions, divided
½ cup chopped dry-roasted peanuts

1. Combine first 9 ingredients in a large bowl; set aside.

2. Cook noodles in boiling water 1 minute. Add carrots and shrimp; cook 2 minutes or until shrimp are done. Drain in a colander over a bowl, reserving cooking liquid. Rinse noodle mixture under cold water; drain. Add noodle mixture, bell pepper, and ¼ cup onions to peanut butter mixture, tossing to combine. Add enough of reserved cooking liquid to keep sauce creamy. Sprinkle with remaining ¼ cup onions and peanuts. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 2 cups noodle mixture, 1 tablespoon green onions, and 2 tablespoons peanuts).

CALORIES 486; **FAT** 16.9g (sat 2.9g, mono 7g, poly 5.2g); **PROTEIN** 30.7g; **CARB** 54.7g; **FIBER** 5.1g; **CHOL** 86mg; **IRON** 3mg; **SODIUM** 933mg; **CALC** 80mg

Kung Pao Shrimp

1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce, divided
1½ teaspoons dry sherry, divided
2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 pound peeled and deveined medium shrimp
1 tablespoon peanut oil
¼ cup chopped dry-roasted peanuts
1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger
1 tablespoon minced fresh garlic
½ teaspoon crushed red pepper
1½ cups thinly sliced celery
1 cup chopped red bell pepper
¼ cup fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
1 teaspoon rice vinegar
¼ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons green onion strips

1. Combine 1 teaspoon soy sauce, 1 teaspoon sherry, cornstarch, and shrimp.
2. Heat oil in a wok over high heat. Add peanuts and next 3 ingredients; stir-fry 30 seconds. Stir in celery and bell pepper; stir-fry 2 minutes or until crisp-tender. Add shrimp mixture; stir-fry 2 minutes. Add remaining 2 teaspoons soy sauce, ½ teaspoon sherry, and broth. Bring to a simmer; cook 1 minute or until slightly thickened. Remove from heat; stir in vinegar and salt. Top with onions. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 1¼ cups).

CALORIES 224; **FAT** 9.1g (sat 1.5g, mono 3.6g, poly 3.1g); **PROTEIN** 25.9g; **CARB** 9.1g; **FIBER** 2.3g; **CHOL** 172mg; **IRON** 3.4mg; **SODIUM** 574mg; **CALC** 91mg

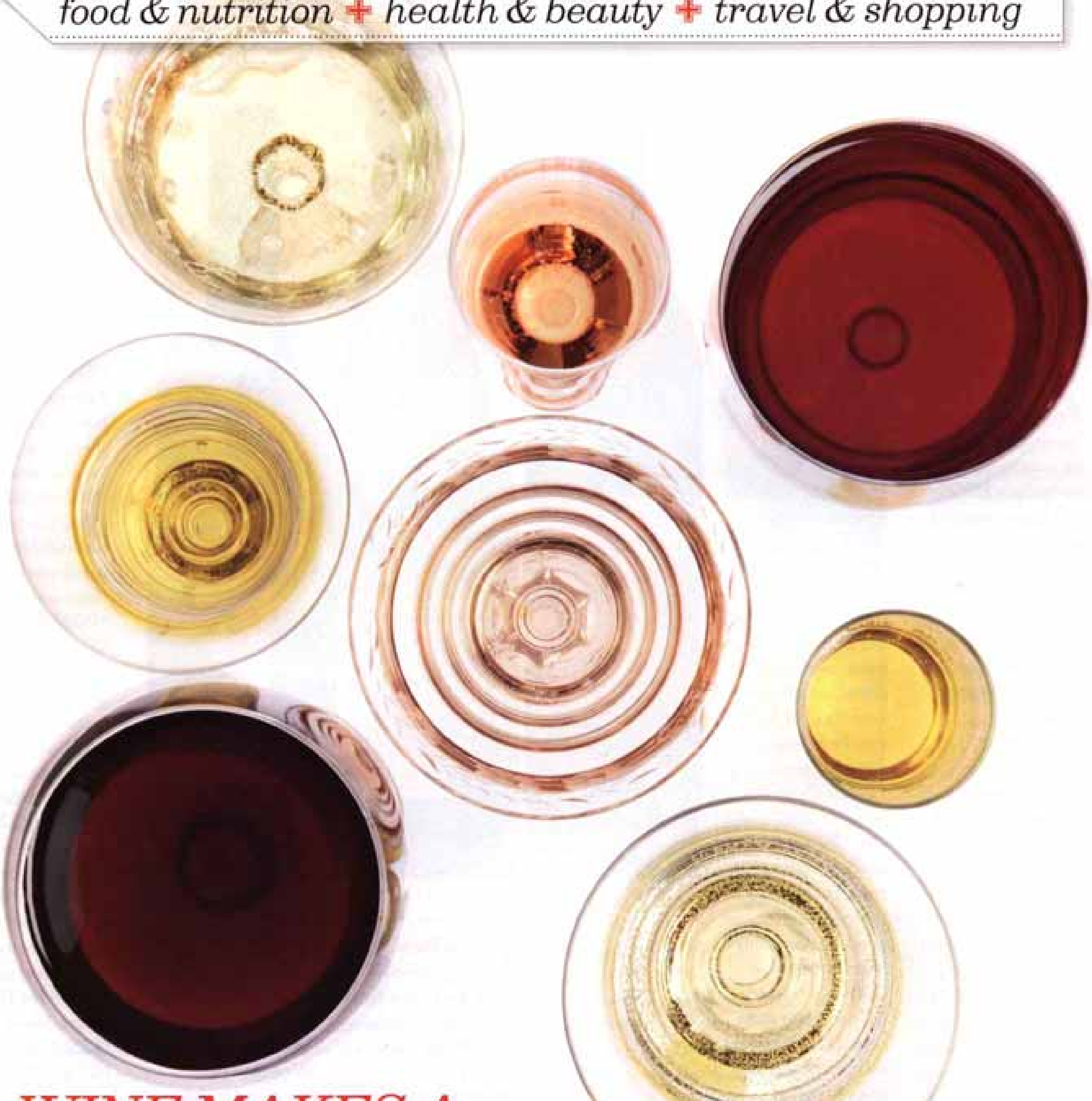
Sour Beans with Minced Pork

Achieving the correct balance of flavor in the beans depends on using two types of vinegar—white vinegar alone will make the beans too tart, while just rice vinegar will yield a taste that's too mild.

1 (3½-ounce) bag boil-in-bag long-grain rice
1 cup white vinegar
1 cup rice vinegar
1¼ pounds green beans, trimmed and cut diagonally into ½-inch pieces
4 teaspoons peanut oil
1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger
1 tablespoon minced fresh garlic
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
½ pound lean ground pork
⅓ cup fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
3 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
1½ teaspoons cornstarch
⅓ cup thinly sliced green onions
¼ cup matchstick-cut carrot

1. Cook rice according to directions.
2. Bring vinegars to a boil in a large saucepan. Add beans; cook 2 minutes. Drain beans (do not rinse).
3. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add ginger, garlic, and pepper; sauté 30 seconds. Add pork to pan; cook 2 minutes or until browned, stirring to crumble. Add beans; cook 2 minutes, stirring occasionally. Combine broth, soy sauce, and cornstarch; stir with a whisk. Stir broth mixture into pork mixture; cook 1 minute or until thickened. Divide rice among 4 plates; top evenly with pork mixture. Sprinkle with onions and carrot. Yield: 4 servings.

CALORIES 290; **FAT** 9.8g (sat 2.8g, mono 3.6g, poly 1.6g); **PROTEIN** 16.6g; **CARB** 34.4g; **FIBER** 5.5g; **CHOL** 43mg; **IRON** 2.6mg; **SODIUM** 483mg; **CALC** 66mg



WINE MAKES A BEAUTIFUL GIFT

BUT WHICH WINE? IN THIS INVITATION-INTENSE MONTH WE face the fun challenge of matching an appropriate bottle to a particular personality—a foodie, say, or wine novice, or a Rather Important Person like a boss.

Next page, our wine-giver's matchmaking guide.

Who gets which wine?

A little matchmaking elevates a bottle from nice gesture to very thoughtful gift indeed—and you might even get to drink a glass...

For your boss

Aim to impress, but be realistic. You could spring for a $100-plus luxury wine, but your boss is better equipped to splurge anyway. Instead, choose bottles that show you did your homework. A couple are costly, but good values.

- **2006 Hess Collection Mendocino Cabernet Sauvignon ($18)** This Napa-based winery produces consistently good cabs. With this Mendocino wine, you get trademark quality for a bargain price.
- **2007 Achaval Ferrer Malbec Mendoza ($55)** Santiago Achaval makes highly sought-after, praiseworthy (and pricey) single vineyard bottlings, as well as this somewhat more reasonably priced, equally vivid wine. It's a big, big red—fleshy and intense.
- **2006 Chateau Talbot ($60)** The 2005 vintage in Bordeaux got lots of press, but the 2006 vintage was also quite good—and arguably offers better value. This one is marked by fine tannins and notes of black currant and cedar. It can be enjoyed now but improves with age.

For a foodie

For people who will go to the ends of the earth just to taste a fabled food, opt for a cutting-edge wine.

- **2008 Castell Castell Silvaner Franken Germany ($16)** Trendsetters seek out grapes like Silvaner from up-and-coming regions like Franken. This dry, slightly chalky wine has peach and citrus notes.
- **2003 Alois Lageder Lagrein Lindberg Vineyard ($25)** Wines of Italy's Trentino-Alto Adige region are trendy. Lageder shows a bright acidity with sour cherry, spice, and earth flavors.
- **Pierre Peters Cuvée de Reserve Blanc de Blancs Non-vintage Champagne ($50)** Beautifully pure with a penetrating mineral essence.

For a wine novice

Wine can be intimidating to a beginner, but a lush Aussie shiraz is easy to get to know (and to love). With bold flavors up front, they're not subtle. But they're not simplistic or one-dimensional either.

- **2007 Rosemount Diamond Label Grenache Shiraz ($10)** The addition of grenache softens the shiraz, making it even more approachable.
- **2007 Jim Barry Lodge Hill ($20)** This house is one of Australia's most consistent producers of shiraz. It's a balanced wine with dark berry flavors and notes of spice.
- **2008 Two Hands Angels Share Shiraz ($25)** Australia's McLaren Vale district produces powerhouse wines like this one. It has notes of spice, flavors of black cherry and raspberry, and a finish that goes on and on.

What we love right now

Champagne elegance at a rosé price, this sparkling Burgundy does not disappoint. Stock up on Louis Bouillot Perle d'Aurore Rosé (NV) for any holiday celebration or special occasion. —Julianna Grimes

Our holiday gift list

For a wine connoisseur

Each of these picks comes from a name wine lovers will appreciate and from a stellar year for winemaking in Tuscany.

- **2006 Monte Antico Tuscano ($10)** Consistently a top value Italian red, it's quaffable, with soft tannins and red fruit.
- **2006 Félsina Chianti Classico ($22)** Félsina delivers a ripe, drinkable wine with a firm tannic structure and a mixture of red and black fruits.
- **2006 Talenti Rosso di Montalcino ($30)** The name "Talenti" carries weight with connoisseurs. This is a great "baby brunello" that's plush, ripe, and oh so seductive.

For a tree hugger

These selections are made by houses that use environmentally sound methods. And they taste great, too.

- **2007 Bonterra Viognier Mendocino/Lake Counties California ($13)** The Bonterra Viognier is an unctuous yet lively white with exuberant floral aromas.
- **2006 Domaine Drouhin Willamette Valley Pinot Noir Oregon ($45)** This pinot noir is produced with solar energy. It's well balanced with notes of cherry and a crisp acidity.
- **2006 Chapoutier Châteauneuf du Pape La Bernardine ($50)** Chapoutier is one of the most dynamic French winemakers. Proof? This luscious, well-structured, and organically made Grenache-dominant Châteauneuf du Pape.

For a host or hostess

These interesting wines from around the world can be enjoyed any time—noon or night. Lively and refreshing, they make good conversation starters, too.

- **2008 Babich Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc ($12)** A consistent example of the zesty, citrusy, juicy sauvignon blancs from New Zealand's Marlborough region.
- **2006 Raventós Reserva Rosé Cava ($23)** Rich, complex, and creamy, this Cava bursts with fruit and easily matches a wide range of food.
- **2007 William Fèvre Chablis Montée de Tonnerre ($35)** This premier cru Chablis, from a first-rate house, has notes of mineral and green apple.

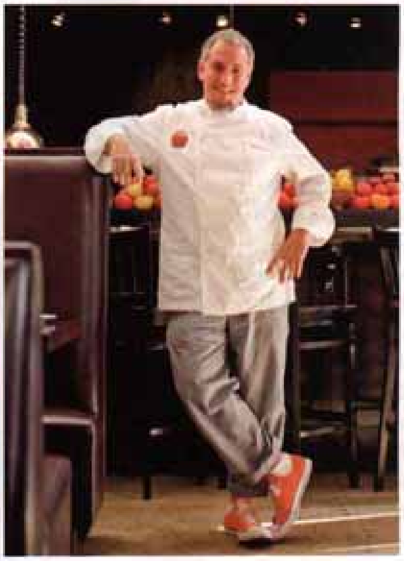
For a kosher friend

Although gifts are not widely exchanged at Hanukkah, a bottle of wine is a welcome addition to any celebration.

- **2007 Golan Heights Chardonnay Galilee Yarden ($17)** The Golan Galilee, from one of the first truly modern wineries in Israel, is a full-bodied wine with lush tropical fruit.
- **2007 Goose Bay Pinot Noir Marlborough New Zealand ($21)** This winery produces light-bodied pinot with vibrant acidity and strawberry notes.
- **2007 Covenant Red C ($42)** It's an accessible world-class wine with fairly soft tannins and notes of spice and currants.

—Wine picks by Lettie Teague

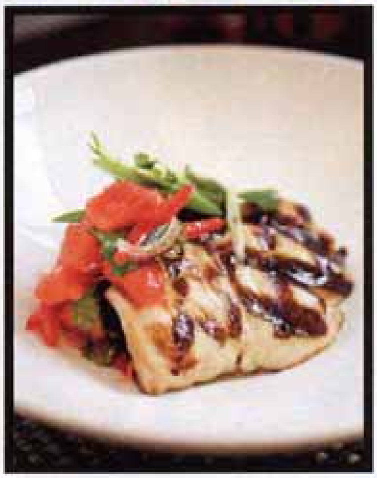
breakfast, lunch, and dinner in... Miami



Chef Michael Schwartz (above), of Michael's Genuine Food & Drink (pictured)

Miami is more like another country than just another American city. Nearly half of its residents are foreign born. The diverse population—plus a near-tropical year-round growing season and a perch right on the Atlantic Ocean—makes Miami one of a kind, and for several years the tropical melting pot has been providing thrilling food.

In just one block of a sleek, swanky neighborhood like the Design District or South Beach, restaurant menu boards cover such Caribbean-cooking mainstays as fiery curries and jerk seasoning, South American arepas and empanadas, traditional matzo ball soup, or high-end steaks with duck-fat frites. At Sra. Martinez, Michelle Bernstein, a James Beard award winner who was born and raised in Miami by an Argentinean mother and a Minnesotan father, shows just how the city's many influences distill into a single dish. She riffs



Brash city, bold flavors: Miami was loving the Cuban sandwich decades before the panini craze, but chefs are also innovating with dishes like fruity tropical relish on grilled grouper.

on the classic Cuban sandwich, using salty, creamy, briny sea urchin in place of the traditional roast pork, pressed in buttered bread until hot and crispy.

The sultry heat—the average high in December is 78 degrees—is just right for bright flavors like citrus-flecked grilled seafood and quickly "cooked," Latin-influenced seviches. With the wealth of seafood available and the variety of kitchen help preparing it, innovative preparations seem to emerge almost spontaneously. Chef Michael Psilakis turns out a creative sampling of Greek-inspired raw meze at his new **Eos** at the Viceroy Hotel (305-503-0373, viceroymiami.com), where basil seed, lemon puree, and microgreens brighten plump scallops, watermelon and crumbled feta lend an edge to thick squares of tuna, and even lamb is left uncooked in a caviar and egg yolk dressing. Those unfamiliar with seviche can sample it by the spoonful at **Jaguar Ceviche Spoon Bar and Latam Grill** (305-444-0216, jaguarspot.com), where on any given day there could be six or seven different takes on swordfish, calamari, and tuna.

While much of the country is dining on cellar roots if they want to eat locally, Miamians are plucking heirloom tomatoes from the vine, feasting on stone crabs, and slicing open fresh grapefruits—just some of the food at its peak right now. **–Victoria Pesce Elliott**

BREAKFAST Breakfast in Miami just might happen at 4 a.m. after a night out dancing. It can be as simple as a sweet roll and *cafecito*, but an omelet offers a more satisfying start (or end) to the day. **Versailles** (305-444-0240), an earthy Cuban eatery despite its lofty name and glitzy decor, serves up a hearty open-faced omelet, called a *tortilla*, which has potatoes inside instead of on the side. A variety of root vegetables appear in Cuban cuisine, including the exotic yucca and boniato, and most definitely the plain white potato, which, when cubed and fried as *papas bravas*, is a common meal accompaniment. Our omelet maximizes flavor with Yukon gold potatoes, fresh tomatoes, and kicky Manchego cheese.

Breakfast Tortilla

You can substitute pecorino Romano cheese for Manchego.

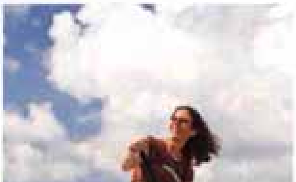
1/2 pound Yukon gold potato (about 1 medium)
1 tablespoon minced fresh chives, divided
3/4 teaspoon salt, divided
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
4 large eggs
1 large egg white
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 garlic clove, minced
3 tablespoons finely grated Manchego cheese
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 cup halved grape or cherry tomatoes

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Place potato in a saucepan; cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer 20 minutes or until tender; drain. Cool. Peel potato; thinly slice.
3. Combine 2 teaspoons chives, ¼ teaspoon salt, pepper, eggs, and egg white in a bowl; stir with a whisk until blended.
4. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in an 8-inch ovenproof nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and potato slices; cook 30 seconds, gently turning potato to coat with oil. Sprinkle with remaining ½ teaspoon salt. Press potato mixture with a spatula into a solid layer in bottom of pan. Pour egg mixture over potato mixture; cook 1 minute. Gently stir egg and potato mixture. Press potato back down in bottom of pan; cook 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Sprinkle with cheese.
5. Bake at 350° for 7 minutes or until center is set. Remove from oven. Drizzle with 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil. Loosen sides of tortilla from pan; gently slide onto a serving platter. Top with tomatoes and remaining 1 teaspoon chives. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 1 wedge and 2 tablespoons tomatoes).

CALORIES 190; **FAT** 10.7g (sat 2.8g, mono 5.5g, poly 1.2g); **PROTEIN** 10g; **CARB** 14g; **FIBER** 1.2g; **CHOL** 215mg; **IRON** 1.3mg; **SODIUM** 581mg; **CALC** 77mg

TRY THIS: *Stand-up paddle boarding*

Miami is one of the only major American cities bordered by two national parks: the swampy Everglades National Park to the west, and underwater haven Biscayne National Park to the east. Most tourists look at the water from the land, but you can see it in reverse via stand-up paddle boarding. The sport is more like gondoliering than surfing (and it's a great workout, too). Those who board on the Biscayne Bay enjoy flat waters, while the more experienced can find a challenge on the ocean side. Rent gear at **Sailboards Miami** (305-361-7245, sailboardsmiami.com) on Key Biscayne.



LUNCH Miamians are passionate about their Cuban sandwiches and debate endlessly about who makes the best. Once simply a working class lunch, this iconic sandwich appears on menus in hundreds of eateries around the city. Like any classic, it's made a bit differently by everyone, but the usual components are ham and fresh-cooked pork, seasoned with a garlicky *mojo*, mingled with Swiss cheese and dill pickles inside toasted, pressed Cuban bread. At **David's Café** (305-672-8707, davidscafe.com) it's flat-pressed *a la plancha* on a hot electric grill and eaten straight from the wax paper package, making it a perfect portable meal for the beach.

Cuban Sandwiches

Citrus-laced mojo and tangy relish add big flavor to this Latin classic.

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 cup minced onion
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
6 garlic cloves, minced
3/4 cup fresh orange juice (about 2 oranges)
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
8 ounces pork tenderloin
Cooking spray
1/2 cup finely chopped dill pickle
2 tablespoons prepared mustard
2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
4 (3-inch) pieces Cuban bread, cut in half horizontally
8 thin slices deli less-sodium ham (about 3 ounces)
4 (1-ounce) slices reduced-fat Swiss cheese
1 cup baby spinach

1. Heat 3 tablespoons olive oil in a small skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion, salt, oregano, black pepper, and minced garlic; sauté 3 minutes or until onion is tender. Remove from heat; stir in orange juice and lime juice. Reserve 2 tablespoons juice mixture; cover and refrigerate. Combine remaining juice mixture and pork in a large zip-top plastic bag; seal. Marinate pork mixture in refrigerator at least 4 hours or overnight.
2. Prepare grill to medium-high heat.
3. Remove pork from bag; discard marinade. Place pork on grill rack coated with cooking spray; grill 15 minutes or until thermometer registers 155° (slightly pink), turning occasionally. Remove pork from grill. Cover loosely with foil; let stand 10 minutes. Cut pork into 16 thin slices.
4. Combine pickle, reserved 2 tablespoons juice mixture, mustard, and 2 teaspoons oil in a small bowl; stir until well blended.
5. Hollow out top and bottom halves of bread, leaving a ½-inch-thick shell; reserve torn bread for another use. Spread 2 teaspoons pickle mixture over cut side of each half. Arrange 4 pork slices, 2 ham slices, 1 cheese slice, and ¼ cup spinach on each bottom half of bread; cover with top halves.
6. Heat a large nonstick grill pan over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add sandwiches to pan. Place a cast-iron or heavy skillet on top of sandwiches; gently press to flatten. Leave skillet on; cook 4 minutes on each side or until cheese melts and bread is toasted. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 1 sandwich).

CALORIES 397; **FAT** 13.5g (sat 4.4g, mono 4.6g, poly 1.7g); **PROTEIN** 30.3g; **CARB** 34.8g; **FIBER** 1.8g; **CHOL** 43mg; **IRON** 2.9mg; **SODIUM** 984mg; **CALC** 398mg

DINNER Loads of local chefs make use of the dazzling array of tropical treasures that grow year-round here. But the mango, a true backyard gem with hundreds of local varieties, symbolizes all things good and sweet in Miami cooking. In fact, the chefs who originally brought Miami's unique cuisine to national attention in the 1980s were dubbed The Mango Gang. One of them, Chef Allen Susser of Chef Allen's, still gives dinner for two to those who bring him two hundred pounds of mango. In South Beach, Chef Claudio Giordano of **Alta Mar** (305-532-3061, altamarrestaurant.com) combines mango and pineapple in a tangy relish and serves it on that day's fresh catch—anything from tuna to mahimahi to pumpkin swordfish. Michael Schwartz, of **Michael's Genuine Food & Drink** (305-573-5550, michaelsgenuine.com) in the Design District, dices papaya and mango into a scorching hot relish to serve alongside black sticky rice and local black grouper cooked in his wood-burning oven. Though this dish is inherently light, we keep flavors fresh and lively with the addition of serrano chile and ginger.

Grilled Mahimahi with Mango Salsa

1/4 cup light coconut milk, divided
6 tablespoons fresh lime juice (about 4 limes), divided
4 (6-ounce) mahimahi or other firm white fish fillets
1 1/2 cups diced peeled ripe mango (about 1/2 pound)
3/4 cup diced English cucumber (about 1/2 medium)
1/3 cup finely diced red bell pepper
2 tablespoons minced red onion
1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
1 teaspoon minced peeled fresh ginger
1 serrano chile, minced
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Cooking spray
Lime slices (optional)
Cilantro sprigs (optional)

1. Combine 3 tablespoons milk and 3 tablespoons juice in a shallow dish; add fish, turning to coat. Cover and marinate at room temperature for 15 minutes.
2. Combine remaining 1 tablespoon milk, remaining 3 tablespoons juice, mango, and next 6 ingredients (through chile) in a bowl. Add 1/4 teaspoon salt; toss well.
3. Remove fish from dish; discard marinade. Sprinkle fish with remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt and pepper. Heat a grill pan over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Cook fish 4 minutes on each side or until desired degree of doneness. Serve with mango salsa. Garnish with lime slices and cilantro sprigs, if desired. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 1 fillet and 1/2 cup salsa).

CALORIES 198; **FAT** 1.7g (sat 0.6g, mono 0.3g, poly 0.3g); **PROTEIN** 32.2g; **CARB** 12g; **FIBER** 1.6g; **CHOL** 124mg; **IRON** 2.2mg; **SODIUM** 507mg; **CALC** 39mg

—Recipes by Bill and Cheryl Jamison

Relaxing yoga stretches

Take a break and unwind with these soothing moves.

You don't have to be as flexible as a rubber band to perform yoga moves. The basic principles of yoga revolve around breathing, gentle stretching, and meditation. There's no equipment required, and you can perform these moves in bare feet. To get you started, we've selected four basic yoga poses that can help calm your mind and stretch your body. You can do all four in one workout, or practice one or two when you need to relieve a little tension.

GAME PLAN:

- Do each move 2 or 3 times for a full routine, 2 days a week.
- Breathe deeply during each move: Fill your abdomen, then chest; exhale from chest, then abdomen. Each breath should take 6 seconds—3 to inhale, 3 to exhale.

Warrior

STEP 1: Stand tall, and step left leg about 3 feet out to left side. Position both feet with toes pointing toward the left.

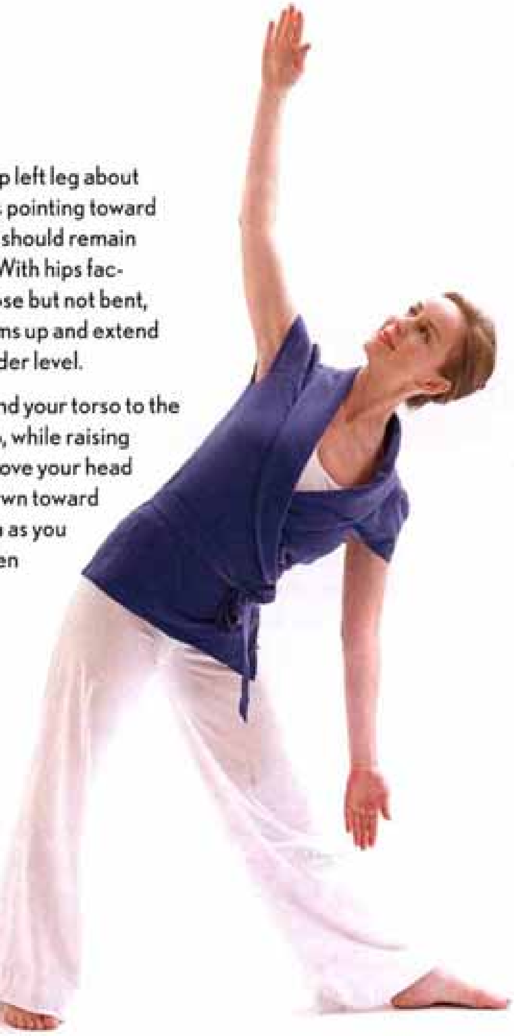
STEP 2: Keep torso tall and facing forward. Inhale as you bend left knee slightly, without allowing it to extend over your toes, while simultaneously raising both arms to shoulder level and extending them out to sides. Turn your head to look over your left arm; exhale. Hold the position as you take three full breaths, then switch sides.

Quick tip: Let your legs support you in this posture. Relax your shoulders—do not raise or lower them—keep your torso lifted and tall, and tighten your abdominal muscles as you lengthen your back and neck. Feel the stretch through your arms, chest, and legs.

Triangle

STEP 1: Stand tall, and step left leg about 3 feet out to left side, toes pointing toward the left (right leg and foot should remain pointing straight ahead). With hips facing forward and knees loose but not bent, breathe in as you raise arms up and extend them out to sides at shoulder level.

STEP 2: Exhale as you bend your torso to the left, dropping your left hip, while raising your right arm straight above your head and extending left arm down toward left shin. Hold the position as you take three full breaths, then switch sides.

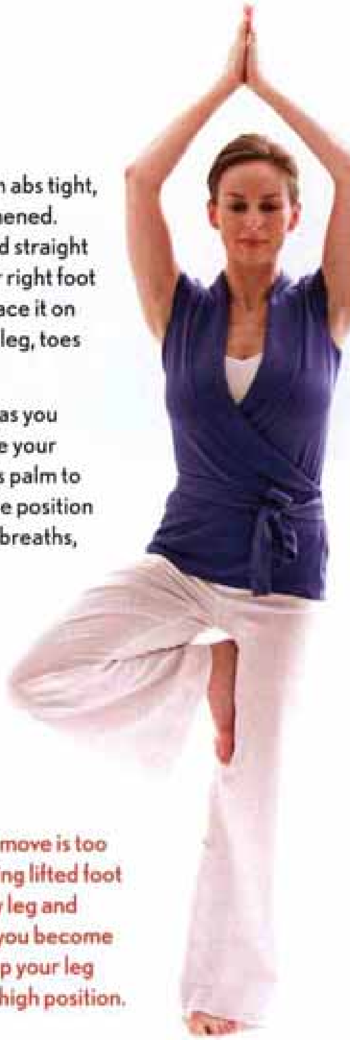


Quick tip:
Imagine performing this move with your back against a wall to keep your form straight.

Tree

STEP 1: Stand tall with abs tight, back and neck lengthened. Keeping eyes focused straight ahead, slowly lift your right foot off the ground and place it on the inner thigh of left leg, toes pointing down.

STEP 2: Next, inhale as you raise both arms above your head and place hands palm to palm; exhale. Hold the position as you take three full breaths, then switch legs.



Quick tip: If this move is too difficult, start by placing lifted foot on ankle of stationary leg and holding the pose. As you become stronger, move foot up your leg until you can hold at thigh position.

Quick tip:
Stretch only as far as comfortable. Do not overarch your back. Keep head facing forward—not up or down.

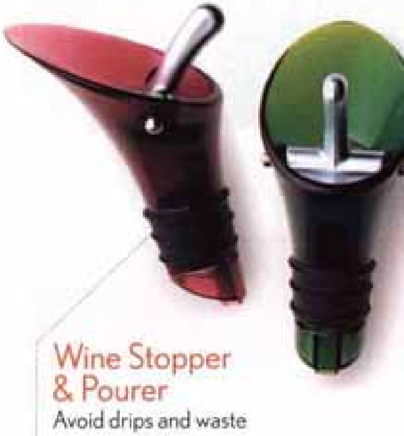
Cobra

STEP 1: Lie on your stomach, hands near head, palms flat on floor, fingers pointing forward. Keep toes pointed behind you.

STEP 2: Inhale as you press hands into the floor, and lift just your torso using your back and abdominal muscles. Drop shoulders back and down, keep gaze slightly up and forward, and tighten your butt to feel the stretch in your upper body; exhale. Hold the position as you take three full breaths, then lower upper body back to the floor.

Shake, swizzle, & stir:

A well-turned-out home bar makes tapping into the health benefits



Trilogy Travel Screw

Modern-classic design comes with foil cutter (not pictured; $25; surlatable.com).

Wine Stopper & Pourer

Avoid drips and waste not a drop when you top bottles with these Orka stoppers. Can be used for oils, too ($6 each; amazon .com).

Twist Coaster Set

These luminous, modern coasters are a knockout ($125/set of 6; nambe.com).

Custom Coasters

Available in a variety of patterns, which can all be personalized with name or witticism ($95/set of 4; iomoi .com)

Bronze Quatrefoil

Matching martini shaker ($40) and glass ($20) fit for a pasha (surlatable.com).

gift ideas

of alcohol a lot more fun.

Sugarcane Swizzle Stix

Stir, then chew! ($19.50; 3 [4-ounce] packages; melissas.com)

Titan Bottle Opener

For the beer drinker with a soft spot for sleek, modern design ($35; macys.com)

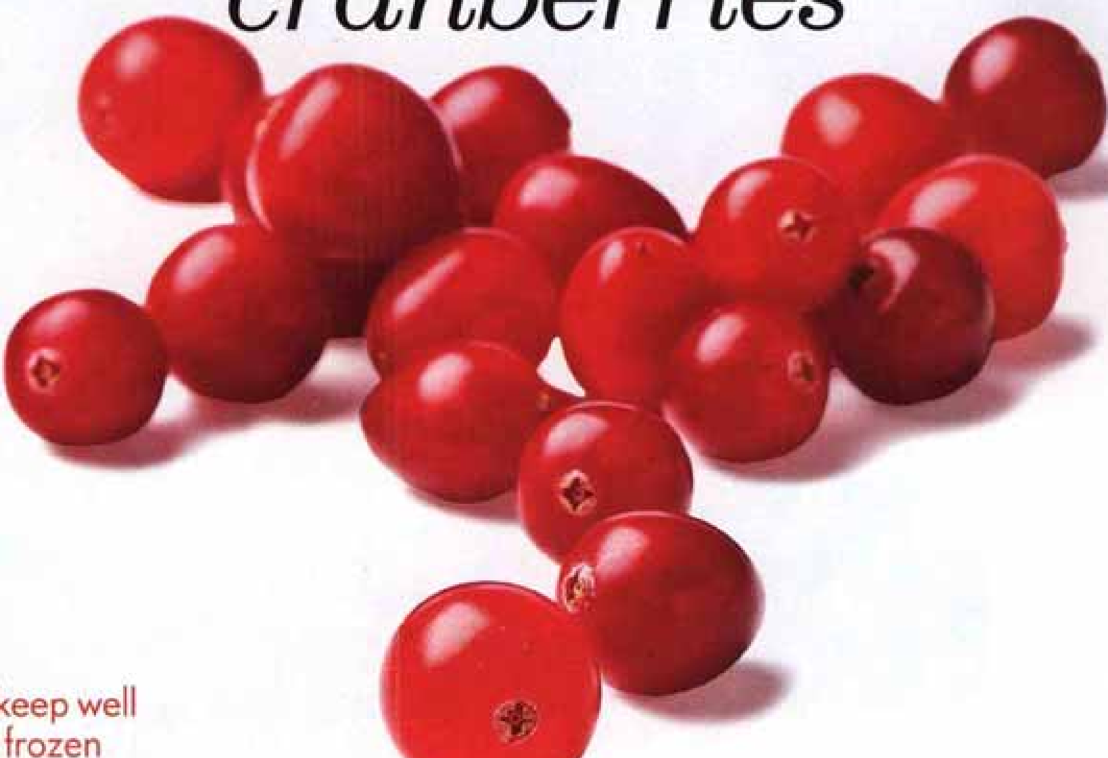
Wine Carafe

Laurel leaves add elegance to a shape that gets plenty of air to a vintage red ($35; theurbannestsf.com).

Goto Venetian Glasses

If you can't afford these beauties, join us in pining for a set of six unique handmade glasses ($300; uncommongoods.com).

10 things to know about cranberries



1 They keep well fresh or frozen

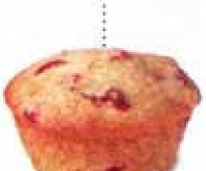
Three percent acid by weight, cranberries naturally tend to ward off spoilage. (One of the acids, benzoic acid, is used as a food preservative.) For best flavor, keep fresh cranberries wrapped tightly in the fridge for as long as 2 months. In the freezer, cranberries will keep for nearly a year—handy, since fresh ones are only available in the fall.

2 Setting the standard for "tart"

As anyone who has choked down a glass of the unsweetened stuff knows, cranberry juice is probably the puckery-est juice of them all. (Blame the high acidity.) Labeling law allows it to be sweetened with other fruit juice, like apple, and still retain the 100-percent juice label as long as the juice it's cut with is also 100-percent juice—go figure. Find the unadulterated kind at health-food stores.

3 Beyond the usual sauce: Other ways to use fresh cranberries

Candy them (simmer in simple syrup until soft, then dry and roll in superfine sugar).



Trade them for blueberries in muffins for little bombshells of sourness.

Mix with sugar and reduce them to a syrup. Strain and use in place of savory gravy on turkey.

Stir them into an apple or pear crisp for a tart counterpoint to the sweet streusel topping.

Or, if you're tired of eating them, thread on fishing line and use as holiday garlands.

5 Even the dried versions have added sugar

There's not enough sugar in a cranberry to make a raisined version sweet enough for most dried-fruit snackers. So cranberries are usually infused with sugar as they are dried. Even so, final sugar content winds up close to that of raisins: about 18 grams per 1-ounce serving.

4 Better, and certainly prettier, than from a can

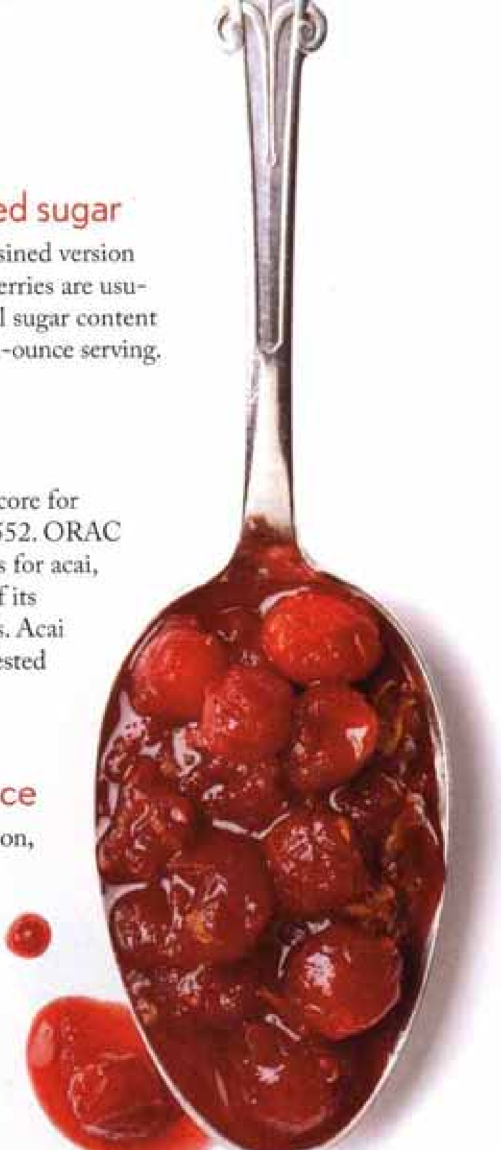
Canned cranberry sauce contains 105 calories and 27 grams of carbohydrates (up to 26 grams of sugar) per modest ¼-cup serving. For the best taste and nutrition, stick with fresh cranberries (more antioxidants, less sugar) in a relish or sauce. They're incredibly easy to make (see recipe at right).

6 Lots and lots of antioxidants

The ORAC (Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity) score for cranberries is 9,584, while blueberries average only 6,552. ORAC is the test used to measure foods' antioxidant levels. As for acai, the Amazonian wonderberry, we found just one test of its antioxidants in a study of fruit juices, not whole berries. Acai and cranberry juice had similar levels, but both were bested by pomegranate juice, undiluted by sweeter juices.

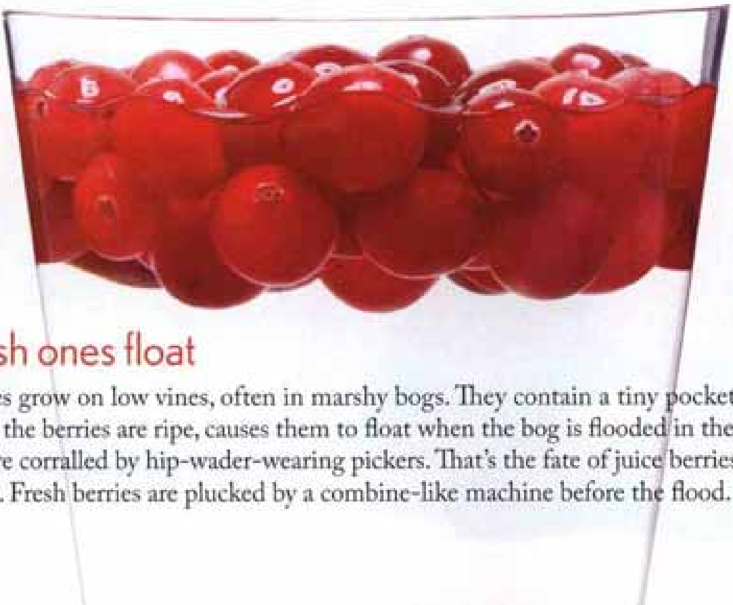
7 Recipe: Homemade cranberry sauce

To make basic cranberry sauce like the one in that spoon, simply bring a cup of sugar, a pinch of salt, and ¾ cup orange juice to a boil in a saucepan, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Reduce the heat to medium, add one 12-ounce bag of cranberries, and watch them pop, releasing their pectin and lightly thickening the cranberry sauce in about 5 minutes. For firmer sauce, simmer another 5 minutes.



8 Infection-fighting reputation: Justified?

Yes. Some doctors recommend cranberry juice if you have an infection, or juice as prevention if you are prone. The antioxidants in cranberries, called proanthocyanidins, help prevent bacteria such as E. coli, the leading cause of bladder infections, from sticking to cells in the urinary tract. (Cranberry pills may do the job, too, but work best if they're made from powdered whole cranberries.)



9 Fresh ones float

Cranberries grow on low vines, often in marshy bogs. They contain a tiny pocket of air that, when the berries are ripe, causes them to float when the bog is flooded in the fall. Then they're corralled by hip-wader-wearing pickers. That's the fate of juice berries—90% of the crop. Fresh berries are plucked by a combine-like machine before the flood.

SILLY HOLIDAY FACT

10 Best berries bounce

Cranberry growers discovered that the freshest berries bounced like little balls. A cranberry "bounce board" then became widely used to judge quality. Until 2008, even large producers like Ocean Spray used a bounce board known as a Bailey separator. Now, Ocean Spray uses lasers, but smaller producers still rely on the bounce method. This tidbit is just the sort of thing that may induce kids to eat cranberry sauce.

—David Joachim

All your pretty presents

We scoured thousands of beauty products for 9 that are perfect for any budget and any gift list...

1
FOR YOUR DAUGHTER
Holiday collection from MAC (mac cosmetics.com) Makeup junkies eagerly await MAC's holiday releases. This year we love the brush and eye bags (from $36), which are perfectly stocking-sized.

2
FOR YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER
Every Man Jack Holiday Shave Kit ($10, everymanjack .com) Ideal for frequent fliers, this well-designed (yet inexpensive) travel bag contains face wash, shave gel, face lotion, and lip balm.

3
FOR YOUR STOCKING
Ornament bubble baths from Pier 1 ($5, pier1.com) De-stress after the holiday rush by slipping into a warm bath, made more festive with confection-scented suds.

4

FOR YOUR BOSS

Diptyque holiday candles ($68, diptyqueparis.com) Pine and roasted chestnuts? Yes, but with an elegant twist. These limited-edition 60-hour candles are also lovely to look at, with designs inspired by Polish paper cuttings.

5

FOR YOURSELF

Clarisonic Mia ($149, clarisonic.com) This smaller version of the classic facial brush, a favorite with dermatologists, uses sonic vibrations and gentle bristles to yield cleaner, softer skin.

6

FOR YOUR MOM

Isotoner Spa Collection gloves ($48, isotoner.com) She can combat chapped winter skin while keeping her hands warm with gloves that are lined with microcapsules of aloe and mineral oil (don't worry, hands stay grease-free).

7

FOR YOUR COWORKER

OPI Mini Merries Nail Lacquer Set ($10, opi.com) Secret Santa time? Miniature bottles of this season's hottest nail colors means you can pick from fun, sparkly shades like Comet Loves Cupid and Shim-merry Chic.

8

FOR YOUR BEST FRIEND

Laura Mercier Colour Wardrobe ($100, lauramercier.com) Though it may qualify as a splurge, your always-there-for-you friend will get $235 worth of eye, cheek, and lip colors, as well as the tools needed to apply them, all in a sleek and chic compact.

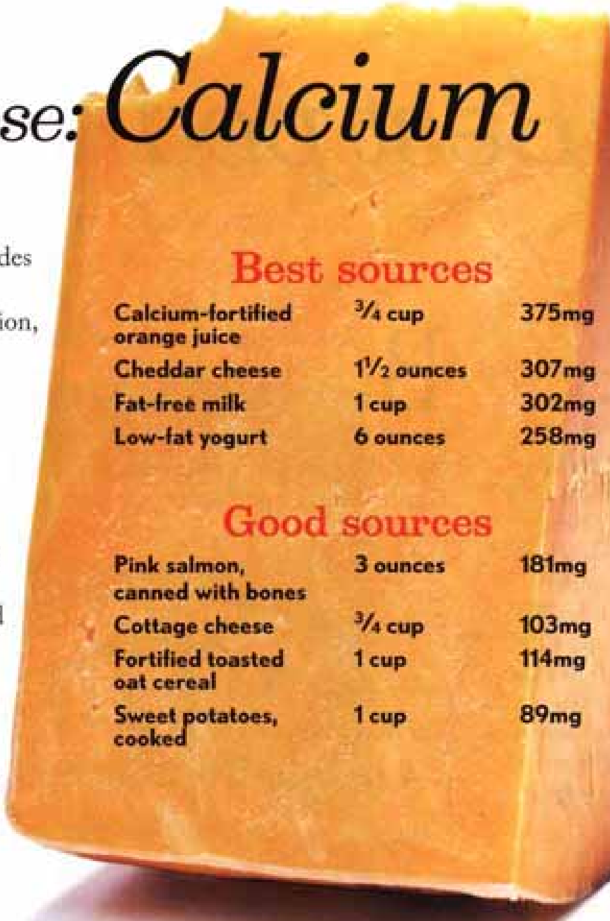
9

FOR YOUR FITNESS-MINDED FRIEND

Solid perfume from Soap & Paper Factory ($18, soapandpaperfactory.com) Available in seven fresh scents, these fragrances can withstand gym bag wear and tear.

—Cindy Hatcher

Your daily dose: Calcium



Why you need it

Calcium is the most abundant mineral in the body. Besides maintaining strong bones and teeth, it's important for muscle contraction, blood vessel expansion and contraction, hormone balance, and nerve conductivity.

How much you need

Most women need 1,000mg daily, but postmenopausal women require 1,200mg. Dairy products are the best source since they supply protein, vitamin D, and phosphorus, which all help with absorption and deposit calcium in bones. Fish with edible bones, dark green vegetables, and calcium-fortified foods (orange juice and cereals) supply good amounts, too.

What about supplements?

About 80 percent of women do not get enough, so supplements can help make up the difference, lowering risks for developing osteoporosis. Calcium citrate is better absorbed than calcium carbonate, especially when taken with food. Also, look for a supplement with added vitamin D. **–Mary Simpson Creel, MS, RD**

Best sources

Calcium-fortified orange juice	3/4 cup	375mg
Cheddar cheese	1 1/2 ounces	307mg
Fat-free milk	1 cup	302mg
Low-fat yogurt	6 ounces	258mg

Good sources

Pink salmon, canned with bones	3 ounces	181mg
Cottage cheese	3/4 cup	103mg
Fortified toasted oat cereal	1 cup	114mg
Sweet potatoes, cooked	1 cup	89mg

Nutrition math: *A healthy daily intake is...*

8-ounce nonfat latte (247mg)

\+

1 1/2 ounces canned sardines, with bones (162mg)

\+

1 cup cooked kale (94mg)

\+

1/6 of 12-inch cheese pizza (357mg)

\+

1/2 cup chocolate pudding (150mg)

= **Daily Intake: 1,010mg**

HOT TOPIC We need concise, clear Dietary Guidelines.

The revised Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) appearing in early 2010 should shrink from the current 84-page book to a 2-page sheet. Scientists need the 17 pages of appendixes, acronyms, and charts—consumers don't.

Even though the DGAs have plenty of good recommendations for healthy eating, the government should translate scientific terms such as "nutrient dense" or "dietary fiber" into practical advice Americans can understand. Here's one simple guideline that's easy to remember: Limit the amount of highly processed foods you consume. The pay-off is a diet rich in produce, whole grains, and quality protein—now that's a positive, wholesome resolution for your life. **–Kathy Kitchens Downie, RD**

HEALTHY LIVING TASTE TEST

Best peanut butters

From creamy to crunchy to natural options, here are our spread-worthy picks.

Besides crunchy and creamy versions, you can find peanut butters labeled "low-sugar," "low-sodium," "no trans fats," even "made with Valencia peanuts." Regardless of the touts, most are made the same way: Peanuts are roasted, ground with salt and sugar, then mixed with an added fat component to prevent separation. During testing, we found some spreads so pasty we got an upper-body workout stirring them; other "spreads" ripped bread. A few had the aroma and flavor of just-ground glory—abundantly peanutty and perfect for spooning right out of the container. In the end, several staffers decided to ditch their household brand for these winners.

HOW WE TEST

- **Method.** We held four blind tastings of creamy, crunchy, natural creamy, and natural crunchy peanut butters (16 in all) on 4 separate days. To see how the samples fared in baking applications, we tested them in a standard cookie recipe.
- **Nutritional guidelines.** We evaluated peanut butters that had 190 to 210 calories and 15 to 17 grams of fat per 2-tablespoon serving. None contained more than 3 grams of saturated fat, 150 milligrams of sodium, and 4 grams of sugars. We did not rate any spreads made with partially hydrogenated oils or palm oils.

THE COOKIE TEST

See which brands performed best in a peanut butter cookie bake-off. **CookingLight.com/features**

FROM THE TEST KITCHEN

4 tips for working with peanut butter

Cold Peanut Noodles with Shrimp, page 32

1. KEEP IT REAL. Full-fat peanut butters trump reduced-fat flavor, and they supply heart-healthy monounsaturated fats and 7 grams of protein per serving. (Choose butters without trans fats.) Reduced-fat spreads offer little calorie savings, and you're ditching good-for-you fats.

2. STIR IT UP. The fat in natural peanut butters will likely separate. If you're a natural peanut butter junkie, you may want to shell out $10 for Grandpa Witmer's Old Fashioned Natural Peanut Butter Mixer (witmerproducts.com).

3. CHECK THE DATE. Fats are susceptible to spoiling, which leaves an off flavor. Check the "use by" date and store as directed by the label.

4. BAKE WITH CARE. Generally, the oilier the butter, the more baked goods spread. Add a little extra baking time when using natural butters.

BEST CRUNCHY TIE!

JIF
Extra Crunchy, $3 (18 ounces)

Raters loved the balanced flavor of this spread. If you like crunch, this is the one for you. Ideal for sandwiches, on crackers, or as a base for Asian noodle sauces.

SKIPPY
Super Chunk, $3 (16.3 ounces)

Besides the abundance of nuts, the peanut aroma and appealing caramel color won us over. Pleasantly salty, too. Use in baking, ice cream, satay sauce, or to thicken a vegetable stew.

BEST CREAMY

SKIPPY
Creamy Peanut Butter, $3 (16.3 ounces)

The roasted peanuts on the ingredient list are evident in the heady aroma and balanced flavor. Testers thought this sample was a touch oily but spread with the least effort. Makes the perfect peanut butter sandwich. Try in dressings with Asian flair, or mix with chile paste with garlic to use as a sauce for meats.

BEST NATURAL CREAMY

ADAMS

100% Natural Creamy Peanut Butter, about $4 (16 ounces)

Even though you expect a little graininess from natural butters, this sample's consistency smoothed out nicely after a good stir, revealing a mild peanut flavor. Substitute for tahini to make baba ghanoush, *tarator*, or hummus. Stir into oatmeal for a flavor boost.

BEST NATURAL CRUNCHY

KREMA

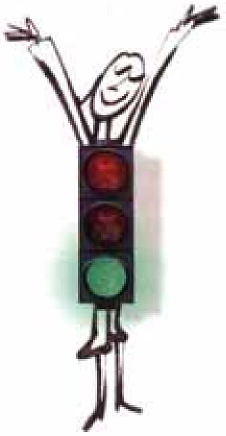
Natural Crunchy Peanut Butter, $3 (16 ounces)

The label claims no added sugar, salt, or hydrogenated oils, and we didn't miss the sweetness or savoriness in this sample. Raters liked the hunks of peanuts, the crunch, and the real peanut flavor. Serve atop toast, waffles, or pancakes drizzled with honey; use as a binder for ground meats; or try it in fudge or blond brownies.

Navigating a steak house restaurant menu

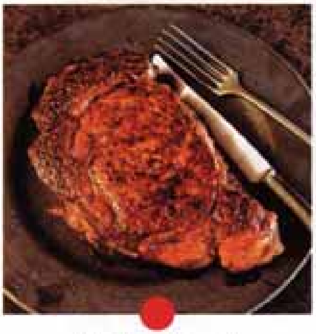
● HEALTHY CHOICE | ● ASK YOUR SERVER | ● SPLURGE ONLY

Depending on the cut, beef isn't much fattier than other meats. Still, some big prime- and choice-grade steak house servings pack enough saturated fat to last you days—and that's before you factor in the side dishes. We analyzed six steak house entrées from popular U.S. restaurants to help point you to healthier choices. Dishes that are marked with a red light aren't untouchable (no food is) but can be a really big splurge. Nutrition numbers are estimates: Results vary widely according to portion size. And if sodium is a concern, ask the kitchen not to use added salt, and watch your intake the rest of the day. Now, let's get to the meat of the matter.



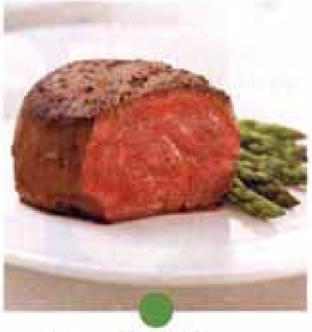
SMART STEAK STRATEGIES

Prime-grade beef (the highest quality) has more marbling than choice-grade, which makes prime steaks tastier, juicier, and, of course, fattier. But expertly cooked steak of either grade won't need buttery sauces—or the butter dollop some steak houses put on top—to be delicious.

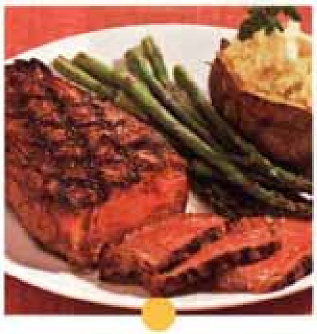


Rib-Eye Steak
56g sat fat
Arguably the juiciest, tastiest menu item, in part because the exquisite marbling delivers two days' worth of saturated fat.

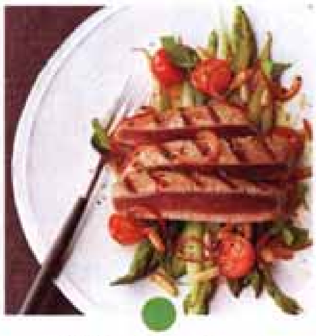
Porterhouse
48g sat fat
Can be 38 ounces or more. Order for a group: Figure 6 ounces per person, cutting fat intake more than 80 percent.



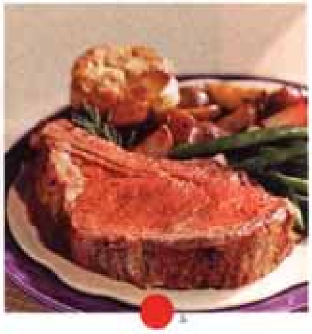
Petite Filet Mignon
15g sat fat
Your best bet for beef, but less fat also means less flavor. Order prime grade: The superior taste is worth the few extra calories.



Strip Steak
28g sat fat
Watch portions: It's less fatty than rib-eye, but strips can weigh in at a pound or more.



Grilled Tuna Steak
0.5g sat fat
Nutritionally it's a good choice, but unless you're a pescetarian, enjoy what you came for: beef.



Prime Rib
49g sat fat
Sliced from a whole roast rib-eye. Look for smaller "queen-size" cuts.

CAUTION! WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ORDERING STEAK HOUSE SIDES

1. **Go naked:** Plain baked potatoes are healthy, but toppings can double the calories and add 18g saturated fat.

2. **Hold the cream:** Creamed spinach has more than three times the calories and fat of sautéed spinach.

3. **Dress for success:** Swap classic blue cheese dressing for vinaigrette. It has one-third fewer calories.

New uses for an everyday ingredient

The texture and mildly tangy flavor of **lower-fat cream cheese** add depth and richness to dishes both sweet and savory.

Enrich baked pasta

Stir 1 to 2 tablespoons into every cup of a light béchamel sauce to replace some of the rich flavor and creaminess lost when the fat is slashed. We whisked ¼ cup into the sauce for our Spinach and Butternut Squash Lasagna (recipe on CookingLight.com) with creamy-luscious results. And it only adds about 20 calories per serving.

Perk up potatoes

In place of sour cream or butter in your standard mashed potato recipe, use an equal amount of softened cream cheese. The flavor is less tart than sour cream, more present than butter, and the texture is full and velvety. Our favorite incarnation: The naturally buttery taste of Yukon gold potatoes pairs well with the tang of the cheese.

Enliven a smoothie

Love a go-to fruit smoothie for breakfast? This variation feels like an indulgence (but really isn't): a cheese-cake–flavored drink. For each serving, add 1 tablespoon of softened ⅓-less-fat cream cheese to fruit mixture before blending (try it with blueberries or strawberries). You gain about 1½ grams protein for only 35 calories.

Make Spinach and Butternut Squash Lasagna even creamier with our secret ingredient.

Coming next month: A new twist on peanut brittle...

A perfect holiday does not require perfectionism

Serenity begins as you let go and even take a few shortcuts.

HOLIDAY GATHERINGS rarely achieve the Hallmark ideal, but when there is an expectation of greeting-card peace and happiness it's usually the hostess who pays a high-stress price. "Many women adopt the 'Type E' personality during this time," says Ronald Nathan, PhD, author of *Relieving Your Holiday Stress,* "doing everything for everyone."

Let history guide the choices you make now, and do less. "Make a list of everything you did related to the holidays last year, and *let go* of the things that aren't absolutely necessary," says Alice Domar, PhD, director of the Domar Center for Mind/Body Health in Waltham, Massachusetts, and coauthor of *Live a Little.* Separate the things you *have* to do from the things you *want* to do this year. "You do need to buy your children gifts, but you don't have to run the church bake sale," Domar says.

Here are a few ideas to help us super-hostesses do less, enjoy more, and keep the eye on the holiday prize: the pleasure and company of friends and family.

HEED THE GHOSTS OF HOLIDAYS PAST

Recall past holiday dinners, especially if they were "interesting," and seat guests accordingly. "Let the host, who understands the psychology of everyone she's invited, create a seating plan," says Domar. "There are almost always people who don't get along, and it's best to keep them away from each other."

If the dinner is more likely to be on the harmonious side, place guests next to people they wouldn't normally sit with. "Holidays are nice for intergenerational communication and connection. I recommend mixing it up," says Cindy Post Senning, EdD, parenting expert at The Emily Post Institute.

But wacky dynamics are a universal condition of family life. "Whether it's an Uncle Scrooge or an irritating mother-in-law, there always seems to be someone who's going to stir the pot. It's important to review what made you stressed last year and be prepared for it," says Nathan. "Go through it in your mind's eye in a relaxed way...mentally rehearse and see yourself overlook it. If you're seeking peace, respond peacefully."

STREAMLINE YOUR SUPPER

In a busy season, guests and hosts benefit when a party is well advertised, far in advance. "I'm a big fan of event e-vites or e-mails at least a few weeks ahead of time," says Alicia Rockmore, of the organizational Web site getbuttonedup.com. She recommends providing as much information as possible—a rough timeline (say, Open House: 4 to 6, Appetizers: 6 to 7, Dinner: 7) and an indication if dress is casual or formal. And don't be too shy to ask for help: food, wine, even flowers. Adjust for guests' budget and time constraints, and tailor tasks accordingly: Someone for whom time is scarcer than money might prefer to bring wine instead of an appetizer.

If you're the hostess, remind yourself that togetherness is the point, not picture-perfect decor. These days, there's less expectation than ever that you'll pull out the crystal, silver, and fine china. "Nobody remembers what the table looked like, they remember the time

spent together," Rockmore says. You can use festive paper plates or everyday dishes, add a few fun, seasonal plate chargers and decorations, and still have a beautiful table. Cleanup is easier, and nothing valuable or important gets broken.

If you're getting bogged down by old, possibly past-their-prime traditions—or trying to live up to an idealized memory—use it as an excuse to try something new. Rockmore has a dessert party the night before Thanksgiving because everyone's too full by the time the pecan pie comes out on Thursday. Domar doesn't cook the night before a big holiday meal (it's either Chinese take-out or pizzas) and offers only bagels and lox the morning of, rather than cooking even more. These bookend gatherings before or after the main event are often the most fun because they aren't burdened by the pressure of high expectations.

GUESTS WOULD RATHER HAVE A RELAXED HOSTESS ON HAND THAN ANOTHER CHEESE BALL.

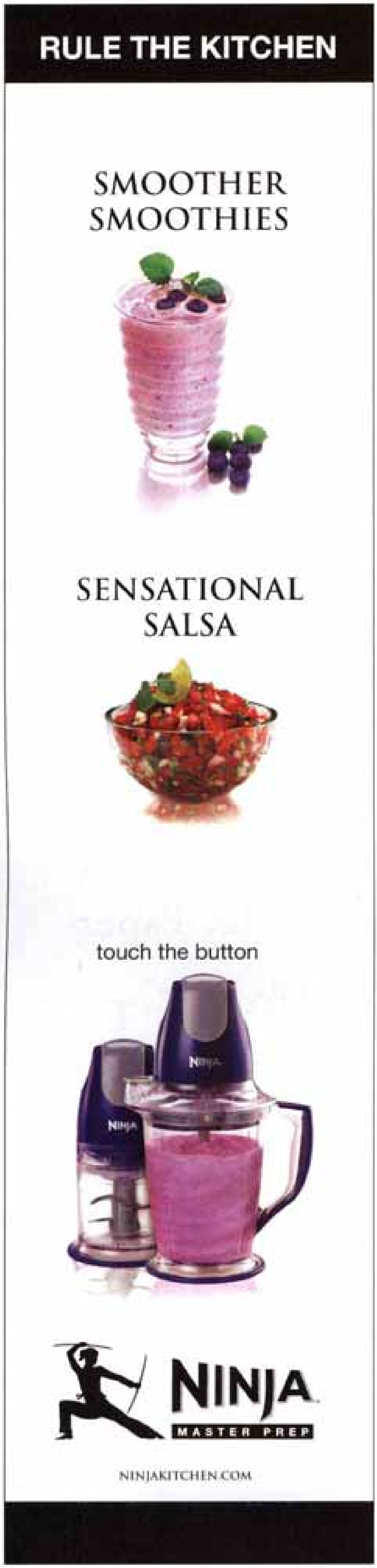
DON'T FORGET THE DOWNTIME

The constant socializing that often comes with the holidays can be exhausting for the entire family, not just you. A little quiet time together can give everyone a breather from the social intensity of lengthy gatherings. Family movies are great if you can find something upon which everyone agrees. *Boston Globe* movie critic Ty Burr suggests these classics: "*The Adventures of Robin Hood*—the 1938 version contains the DNA of every Robin Hood movie since. *Meet Me in St. Louis*—this and *Singin' in the Rain* are the best starter musicals. And in *North by Northwest*, Cary Grant, Alfred Hitchcock's most kid-friendly wind-up toy, runs from biplanes and hangs from Mount Rushmore."

Beyond family downtime, don't forget to take some time out for yourself. Exercise is usually the first item sacrificed for a busy holiday schedule, but there's no reason to change what you require in your everyday routine to stay stress-free. To the contrary—exercise may be just what you need. "The number one way for a hostess to reduce stress (after a glass of wine)," says Domar, "is to take a long walk by herself." Adds Nathan, "Exercise has been shown to decrease anger by 60 percent and depression by 30 percent. It's one of nature's best tranquilizers."

Giving your inner perfectionist a holiday isn't easy. But don't beat up on yourself over a bad moment. "Let go of throwing the perfect party, and shoot for having a friendly one instead so that you can relax and enjoy," Nathan says. "Guests would rather have a relaxed hostess than an extra cheese ball."

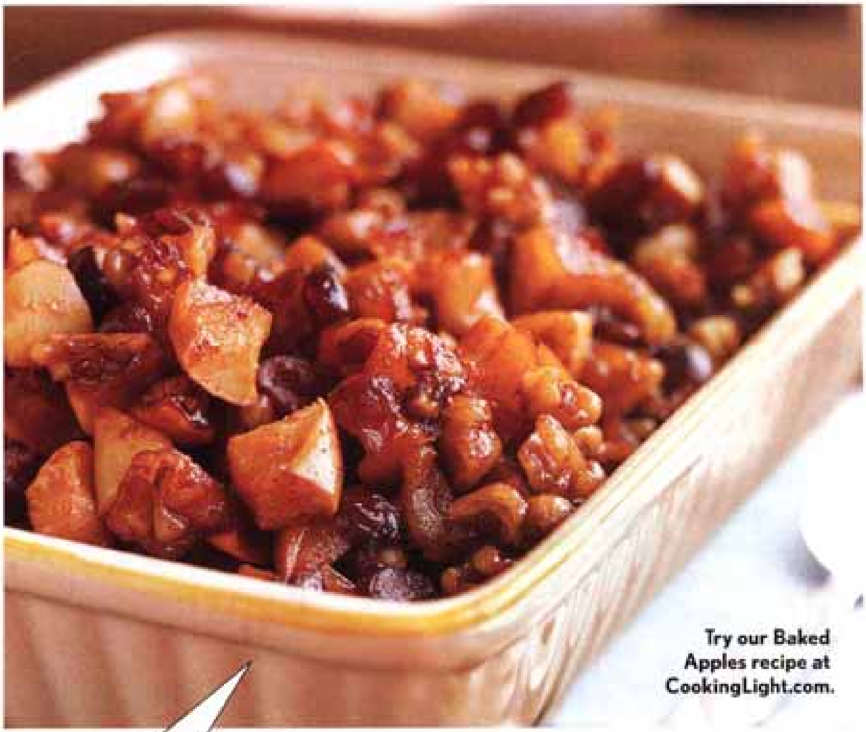
—Kate Meyers



HEALTHY LIVING SAVING

How do you manage your holiday budget?

Spend smarter this season with money-saving strategies from *Cooking Light* readers.



Try our Baked Apples recipe at CookingLight.com.

Tip of the Month

MAKE DOUBLE-DUTY RECIPES

I try to include versatile recipes in my holiday menus that can span more than one meal, like baked apples. I can serve them for breakfast or dessert—and they can be reheated.

—Carolyn Stephens, Las Vegas

Share your bounty

I like to personalize my gifts. Last year I gave my friends jars of spaghetti sauce made from homegrown tomatoes that I froze from my summer garden.

—Denise Puthuff, Louisville, Ky.

Buy smaller

I like to create gift baskets and fill them with small items that can be purchased from dollar stores. I select things I know the person enjoys

and uses, like specialty teas or coffees.

–Paula Singleton, Waterford, N.Y.

Benefit from freebies

A local store in my area offers a free turkey when you purchase a minimum of $75 in groceries. I look for the largest turkey they have!

–Trisha Erickson, San Clemente, Calif.

Track your spending

I use a calculator to keep a running total as I shop. There are no surprises at the cash register, and it helps me avoid impulse buys.

–T.I. Izo, Holly Springs, Ga.

Keep gifts memorable

I focus on meaning rather than monetary value. For instance, I once gave my brother and sister a restored photo of our parents at their wedding reception—it was on the rooftop at the Waldorf Astoria in 1949.

–Amy Dalphy, Mission Viejo, Calif.

Stock up for next year

As soon as the holidays end, I stockpile wrapping accessories for the next year. You can save at least 50 to 75 percent. In January and February, you can also get deals on items that didn't sell during the winter season. Why not buy a cashmere scarf or leather gloves at a discount?

–Sharon Bohling, Hammond, Ind.

Shop (and ship) early

I begin planning and shopping early so I find what I want to give at a price I am comfortable with. Shopping under pressure can lead to overspending. This also allows me to ship my packages early, using the least expensive option.

–Linda Mullaney, Benicia, Calif.

GIVE TO OTHERS

Instead of buying gifts for friends, I make charitable donations in their names—no chance of overspending or searching for that "perfect" item. I give each person a homemade muffin with a card detailing the charity.

–Shelley Brosnan, Fairfax, Va.

Spend smarter

I save during the year in a holiday account offered by my bank, so I can pay cash for gifts. I also look for gifts that keep giving—like a year's subscription to *Cooking Light*.

–Kathi Lucia, Kirkland, Wash.

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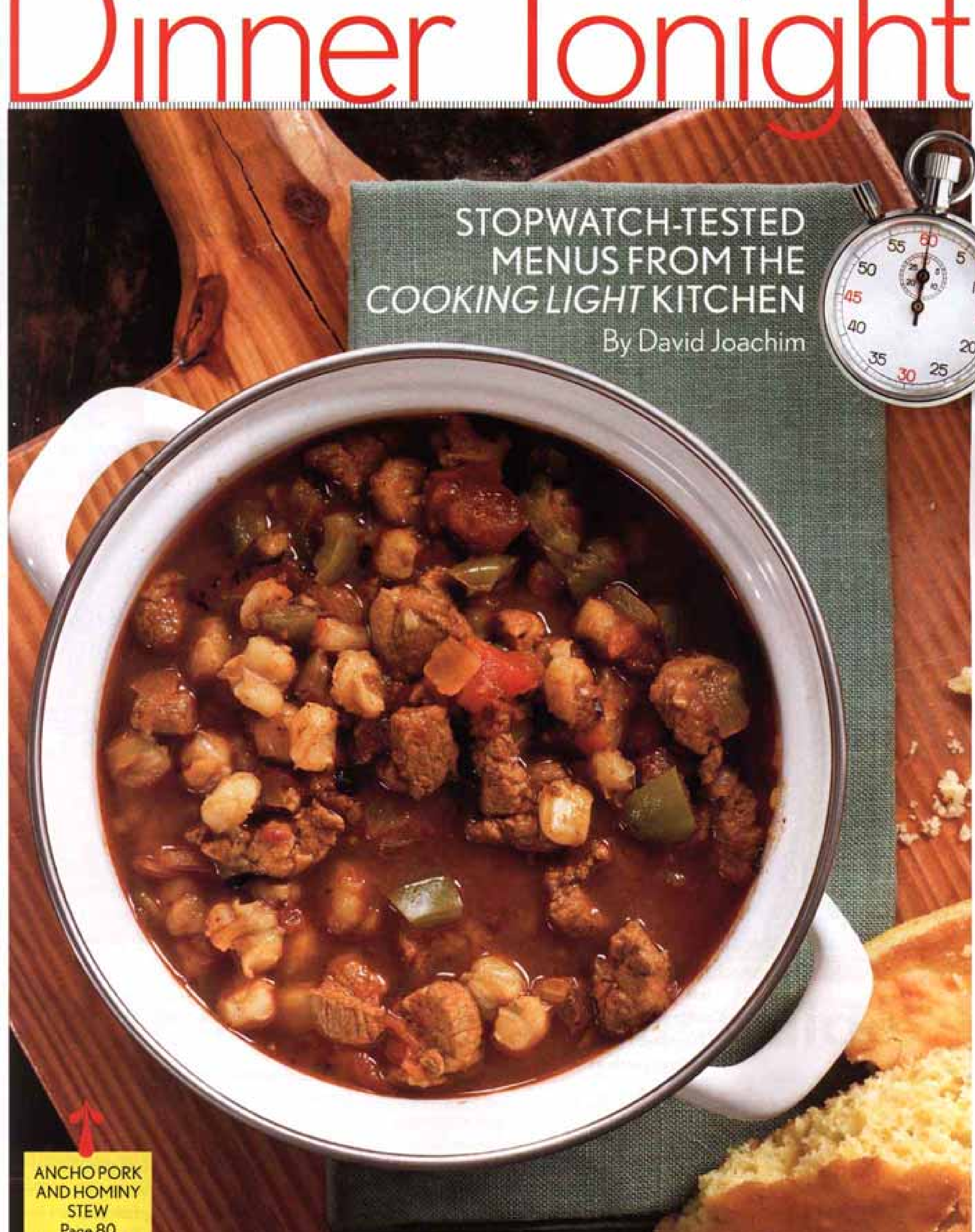
Puff Pastry Wrapped Brie
1 sheet Pepperidge Farm Puff Pastry Sheets, thawed
1 Brie cheese round (8 oz.)
1 egg
1 Heat oven to 400 F. Unfold pastry on floured surface. Place cheese in center. Fold pastry over cheese to cover. Trim excess pastry and press to seal. Reserve scraps for decoration, if desired.
2. Beat egg with 1 tbsp. water. Brush seam of pastry with egg mixture. Place seam side down onto baking sheet. Brush with egg mixture.
3. Bake 25 min. or until golden brown. Let stand 20 min. Serves 6.
Easy as 1, 2, 3.
Gone in 4, 5, 6.
For inspiring add-in ideas, recipes and videos, visit PUFFPASTRY.COM
PUFF PASTRY SHEETS, SHELLS & READY-TO-BAKE TURNOVERS.
PEPPERIDGE FARM
GOOD IS IN THE DETAILS.℠
Look for Puff Pastry in the freezer aisle.
3 STEP Recipe
PREP • FILL • BAKE
PEPPERIDGE FARM
Puff Pastry
SHEETS

Dinner Tonight

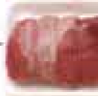


STOPWATCH-TESTED MENUS FROM THE *COOKING LIGHT* KITCHEN

By David Joachim

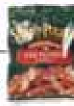
ANCHO PORK AND HOMINY STEW

Page 80



SIMPLE SUB
If you can't find beef shoulder tender, you can also use beef or pork tenderloin.

FLAVOR HIT
Tossing in thyme with the potatoes echoes the herbiness of the beef.



TIME-SAVER
Refrigerated potato wedges cook in a fraction of the time fresh tubers would take.

40 minutes

THE GAME PLAN

While broiler heats:
- Chop herbs.
- Mince garlic.
- Trim beef.
- Rub beef with herb mixture.

While beef and potatoes cook:
- Prepare Brussels sprouts.

Herb-Roasted Beef and Potatoes

with Browned Butter Brussels Sprouts

Shoulder tender (also labeled "petite tender") is a relatively new cut of beef that's moderately lean, quick-cooking, tender, and flavorful.

2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme, divided
1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
2½ tablespoons olive oil, divided
1¼ teaspoons kosher salt, divided
¾ teaspoon black pepper, divided
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 (8-ounce) beef shoulder tender roasts, trimmed
Cooking spray
1 (20-ounce) package refrigerated potato wedges (such as Simply Potatoes)

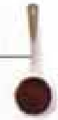
1. Preheat broiler.

2. Combine 1 tablespoon thyme, rosemary, parsley, 1 tablespoon oil, ¾ teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon pepper, and garlic; rub evenly over both sides of beef. Place beef on the rack of a broiler pan coated with cooking spray; place rack in pan.

3. Combine the potatoes, remaining 1½ tablespoons oil, remaining ½ teaspoon salt, and remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper; toss. Arrange potato mixture onto rack around beef. Broil 7 minutes. Turn beef over. Broil 7 minutes or until beef is desired degree of doneness. Remove from oven. Place beef on a cutting board; let stand 5 minutes. Stir potatoes; sprinkle with remaining 1 tablespoon thyme. Cut beef across grain into thin slices; serve with potatoes. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 3 ounces beef and ¾ cup potatoes).

CALORIES 318; **FAT** 14.6g (sat 3.6g, mono 8.7g, poly 1.3g); **PROTEIN** 26.1g; **CARB** 18.7g; **FIBER** 3.9g; **CHOL** 66mg; **IRON** 3.2mg; **SODIUM** 788mg; **CALC** 16mg

For the Browned Butter Brussels Sprouts:
Steam 1 pound trimmed, halved Brussels sprouts 5 minutes or until crisp-tender; drain well. • Melt 1½ tablespoons butter in a large skillet over medium heat; cook until butter browns. • Add Brussels sprouts; cook 6 minutes or until tender, stirring frequently. • Stir in 2 teaspoons lemon juice, ¼ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon black pepper.



SIMPLE SUB
Use regular chili powder in place of ancho, and decrease cumin by half.

PREP POINTER
For great corn bread crust, heat the skillet in the oven for five minutes before adding batter.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP
You can freeze the stew up to two months.

40 minutes

THE GAME PLAN

Preheat oven.
Prepare spice mixture.
While pork browns:
- Chop onion and bell pepper.
- Mince garlic.

While stew simmers:
- Make corn bread.

Ancho Pork and Hominy Stew

with Jalapeño Corn Bread

2 tablespoons ancho chile powder
2 teaspoons dried oregano
1½ teaspoons smoked paprika
1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon salt
1½ pounds pork tenderloin, trimmed and cut into ½-inch pieces
1 tablespoon olive oil, divided
2 cups chopped onion
1½ cups chopped green bell pepper
1 tablespoon minced garlic
2½ cups fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
1 (28-ounce) can hominy, drained
1 (14.5-ounce) can fire-roasted diced tomatoes, undrained

1. Combine first 5 ingredients in a large bowl; set 1½ teaspoons spice mixture aside. Add pork to remaining spice mixture in bowl, tossing well to coat.

2. Heat 2 teaspoons oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add pork mixture to pan; cook 5 minutes or until browned, stirring occasionally. Remove pork from pan; set aside. Add remaining 1 teaspoon oil to pan. Add onion, bell pepper, and garlic; sauté 5 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally. Return pork to pan. Add reserved 1½ teaspoons spice mixture, broth, hominy, and tomatoes; bring to a boil. Partially cover, reduce heat, and simmer 25 minutes. Yield: 6 servings (serving size: 1⅓ cups).

CALORIES 300; **FAT** 8.3g (sat 2.1g, mono 3.7g, poly 1.4g); **PROTEIN** 28.9g; **CARB** 26.9g; **FIBER** 6.1g; **CHOL** 76mg; **IRON** 3.2mg; **SODIUM** 523mg; **CALC** 51mg

For the Jalapeño Corn Bread:
Preheat oven to 450°. • Combine 1 cup low-fat buttermilk, ¼ cup canola oil, 3 tablespoons sugar, ½ teaspoon salt, and 2 large eggs in a large bowl, stirring with a whisk. • Sprinkle 4 teaspoons baking powder over batter; whisk until blended. • Fold in 1 cup yellow cornmeal, 4.5 ounces (about 1 cup) all-purpose flour, and 1 chopped jalapeño pepper (do not remove seeds). • Spoon batter into a 10-inch cast-iron skillet coated with cooking spray. • Bake at 450° for 20 minutes or until lightly browned.

FLAVOR HIT
Shallots lend body and mild onion taste to the glaze.

SIMPLE SUB
Use finely chopped green onions in place of chives for the potatoes.

TIME-SAVER
You can use microwave-ready bags of fresh green beans and skip the blanching step.

30 minutes

THE GAME PLAN

While water for green beans comes to a boil:
- Trim green beans.
- Season pork.
- Chop shallots.
- Slice garlic.

While pork cooks:
- Warm potatoes.
- Blanch green beans.

While sauce cooks:
- Finish green bean side dish.

Pork with Pomegranate Pan Sauce

with Sour Cream Mashed Potatoes • Garlic Green Beans

A simple spice rub flavors boneless pork chops, but the sweet-tart sauce is the real star of this dish. The sweetness of sugar and the sharpness of shallots bring the sour flavors of pomegranate juice and vinegar into perfect balance.

1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
4 (4-ounce) boneless center-cut pork loin chops
2 teaspoons olive oil
1/3 cup chopped shallots
3/4 cup pomegranate juice
1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

1. Combine first 4 ingredients in a small bowl; sprinkle over pork chops.

2. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add pork chops; cook 3 minutes on each side. Remove and keep warm. Add shallots to pan; cook 45 seconds, stirring constantly. Add juice, 1 tablespoon sugar, and vinegar; bring to a boil. Cook for 5 minutes or until slightly thick. Serve pork with sauce. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 1 pork chop and about 2 tablespoons sauce).

CALORIES 232; **FAT** 8.8g (sat 2.7g, mono 4.6g, poly 0.8g); **PROTEIN** 24g; **CARB** 13.1g; **FIBER** 0.3g; **CHOL** 67mg; **IRON** 1.3mg; **SODIUM** 352mg; **CALC** 34mg

For the Sour Cream Mashed Potatoes:
Prepare 1 (20-ounce) package refrigerated mashed potatoes according to package directions. • Stir in 2 tablespoons reduced-fat sour cream. • Top each serving with 1 teaspoon butter and ½ teaspoon minced fresh chives.

For the Garlic Green Beans:
Cook ¾ pound trimmed green beans in boiling water 5 minutes or until crisp-tender. • Drain and plunge into ice water; drain. • Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. • Melt 1 tablespoon butter in pan. • Add 3 thinly sliced garlic cloves; sauté 2 minutes or until golden brown. • Add beans, ¼ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon black pepper; cook 2 minutes or until heated.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP

You can prepare this pasta toss up to two days ahead; cold leftovers are great.

SIMPLE SUB

Try substituting another cured meat, like sopressata, capocollo, or cotto ham, for prosciutto.

VEGETARIAN SWAP

Omit prosciutto; add 2 ounces cubed provolone.

40 minutes

THE GAME PLAN

While broiler heats:
- Bring water to a boil for pasta.
- Chop olives, prosciutto, tomatoes, and artichokes.
- Grate cheese.

While bell pepper broils:
- Cook pasta.
- Toast pine nuts.
- Prepare broccoli rabe.

Antipasto-Style Penne

with Lemon-Garlic Broccoli Rabe

If you prefer crispy prosciutto, spread it out on a baking sheet and broil 4 minutes.

1 medium red bell pepper
1/2 cup pitted kalamata olives, chopped
1/3 cup refrigerated pesto
3 ounces prosciutto, chopped
1 (7-ounce) jar oil-packed sun-dried tomato halves, drained and chopped
1 (6-ounce) jar marinated quartered artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
8 ounces uncooked penne pasta (about 2 cups)
1/2 cup (2 ounces) grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, divided
1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted

1. Preheat broiler.

2. Cut bell pepper in half lengthwise; discard seeds and membranes. Place pepper halves, skin sides up, on a foil-lined baking sheet; flatten with hand. Broil 8 minutes or until blackened. Place in a zip-top plastic bag; seal. Let stand 5 minutes. Peel and chop bell pepper; place in a large bowl. Stir in olives, pesto, prosciutto, tomatoes, and artichokes.

3. Cook the pasta according to package directions, omitting salt and fat; drain. Add cooked pasta and 1/4 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese to bell pepper mixture, and toss gently to combine. Spoon about 1 cup pasta mixture into each of 6 bowls, and sprinkle each serving with 2 teaspoons remaining cheese and 2 teaspoons pine nuts. Yield: 6 servings.

CALORIES 404; **FAT** 21.3g (sat 4.4g, mono 10.6g, poly 4.4g); **PROTEIN** 16.5g; **CARB** 39.9g; **FIBER** 4.3g; **CHOL** 21mg; **IRON** 2.9mg; **SODIUM** 764mg; **CALC** 162mg

For the Lemon-Garlic Broccoli Rabe:

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. • Add 1/4 cup water and 1 1/4 pounds trimmed broccoli rabe to pan. • Cover and cook for 3 minutes. • Add 2 tablespoons olive oil, 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper, and 2 minced garlic cloves. • Cook, uncovered, 2 minutes or until broccoli rabe is tender. • Remove from heat, and stir in 2 teaspoons grated lemon rind, 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt, and 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper.

KID PLEASER
Sub chicken broth for sherry, and either omit the olives or change to milder black ones.

FLAVOR HIT
Saffron adds a welcome earthy quality to the sauce.

PREP POINTER
To prevent a sticky mess, coat the blade of your knife with cooking spray before chopping dates.

30 minutes

THE GAME PLAN

While water for pasta comes to a boil:
- Chop onion.
- Mince garlic.
- Slice olives.

While sauce mixture simmers:
- Prepare salads.

Spanish Spaghetti with Olives

with Pear, Date, and Manchego Salad

8 ounces thin spaghetti
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 cups chopped onion
2 teaspoons minced garlic
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon celery salt
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 teaspoon crushed saffron threads (optional)
8 ounces extra-lean ground beef
1 2/3 cups marinara sauce
1/2 cup sliced pimiento-stuffed olives
1/4 cup dry sherry
1 tablespoon capers
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley, divided

1. Cook pasta according to package directions, omitting salt and fat; drain.

2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion to pan; sauté 4 minutes or until tender. Add garlic; sauté 1 minute. Stir in oregano, celery salt, red pepper, black pepper, and saffron, if desired. Crumble beef into pan; cook 5 minutes or until beef is browned, stirring to crumble. Stir in marinara sauce, olives, sherry, capers, and 3 tablespoons parsley. Bring to a boil; reduce heat, and simmer 15 minutes.

3. Add spaghetti to sauce mixture. Cook 2 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Sprinkle with remaining 1 tablespoon parsley. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: about 1¾ cups).

CALORIES 445; **FAT** 12.1g (sat 3g, mono 5.9g, poly 0.8g); **PROTEIN** 22.3g; **CARB** 60.6g; **FIBER** 5.4g; **CHOL** 21mg; **IRON** 5.2mg; **SODIUM** 832mg; **CALC** 72mg

For the Pear, Date, and Manchego Salad:
Arrange 1 cup gourmet salad greens on each of 4 plates. • Finely chop 2 ripe Bosc pears; toss with 2 teaspoons lemon juice. • Divide pears, 6 finely chopped pitted dates, and 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts evenly among salads. • Combine 1½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, 2 teaspoons sherry vinegar, ¼ teaspoon salt, and ⅛ teaspoon black pepper; stir with a whisk. • Drizzle evenly over salads. • Top each salad with ½ ounce shaved Manchego cheese.

—Additional recipe by David Bonom

SHOPPING LIST

PORK WITH POMEGRANATE PAN SAUCE

2 shallots
¾ cup pomegranate juice
garlic powder
ground cumin
olive oil
balsamic vinegar
sugar
4 (4-ounce) boneless center-cut pork loin chops

Sour Cream Mashed Potatoes

fresh chives
1 (20-ounce) package refrigerated mashed potatoes
reduced-fat sour cream
butter

Garlic Green Beans

¾ pound fresh green beans
garlic
butter

SPANISH SPAGHETTI WITH OLIVES

1 large onion
garlic
fresh parsley
8 ounces thin spaghetti
1⅔ cups marinara sauce
pimiento-stuffed olives
capers
olive oil
dried oregano
celery salt
crushed red pepper
saffron threads
dry sherry
8 ounces extra-lean ground beef

Pear, Date, and Manchego Salad

4 cups gourmet salad greens
2 ripe Bosc pears
1 lemon
pitted dates
walnuts
extra-virgin olive oil
sherry vinegar
2 ounces Manchego cheese

ANTIPASTO-STYLE PENNE

1 medium red bell pepper
pitted kalamata olives
1 (7-ounce) jar oil-packed sun-dried tomato halves
1 (6-ounce) jar marinated quartered artichoke hearts
8 ounces penne pasta
pine nuts
refrigerated pesto
3 ounces prosciutto
2 ounces Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Lemon-Garlic Broccoli Rabe

1¼ pounds broccoli rabe
garlic
1 large lemon
olive oil
kosher salt
crushed red pepper

HERB-ROASTED BEEF AND POTATOES

fresh thyme
fresh rosemary
fresh parsley
garlic
olive oil
kosher salt
1 (20-ounce) package refrigerated potato wedges
2 (8-ounce) beef shoulder tender roasts

Browned Butter Brussels Sprouts

1 pound Brussels sprouts
1 lemon
butter

DINNER TONIGHT ONLINE HELP!
- More fast meals and ideas
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CookingLight.com/dinnertonight

Why kalamata?

Meaty, rich, and slightly fruity, kalamata olives bring big flavor to any dish. To speed up preparation, purchase pitted olives in a jar or from the olive bar of larger markets.

Piecrust Basics

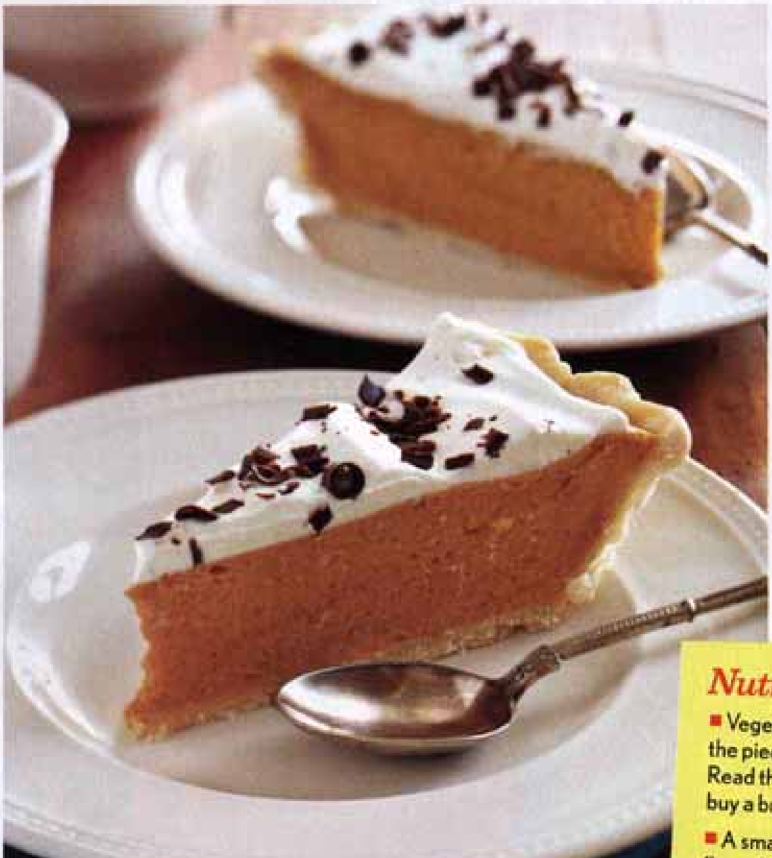
After years of tinkering to perfect the flavor and texture, we present our best pie pastry ever!

Blind bake the crust for already cooked fillings.

If the filling is cooked, load it into a prebaked shell. To bake the crust, simply roll out your pastry dough, fit it into your pan, pierce it with a fork (to minimize shrinkage as it bakes), weight it down with pie weights or dried beans, and bake until it's done. Then cool it and spoon in your filling.

Vary the crust's flavor.

Add chopped fresh herbs, a pinch of ground red pepper, ground nuts, or other seasonings to customize your piecrust.



Tart pans offer variety and elegant appearance.

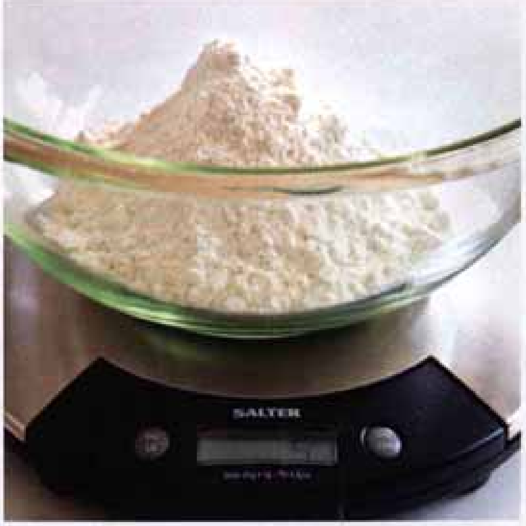
The difference between a tart and a pie is simple: It's all about the pan each is baked in. Pies, served from the dish in which they bake, tend to be homey. Tarts often bake in a scallop-edged pan and are frequently removed from the pan for a special-occasion presentation.

Nutrition notes

- Vegetable shortening gives the piecrust a flaky texture. Read the nutrition labels, and buy a brand with no trans fats.
- A small bit of butter adds flavor but keeps saturated fat in check.

There's something comforting and eternally satisfying about a homemade pie. Be it savory or sweet, nothing touches the flavor. Baking from scratch is just as satisfying and no small accomplishment, though it's simpler than you might think. Success starts with—and depends on—the crust. We've baked more than a few pies over the years and struggled to balance the ratio of fat to flour for optimum flavor and texture while keeping the crust healthy. Here we share our tastiest recipe yet. Once you master the shell, you can easily bake a pie (or tart) for any occasion.

4 STEPS TO FLAKY, DELICIOUSLY LIGHT PASTRY



1 WEIGH OR MEASURE FLOUR CAREFULLY. Too much flour and you'll have a dense, dry, and floury-tasting crust. Invest in an inexpensive scale, which will ensure success every time you bake.

2 COMBINE WET AND DRY INGREDIENTS. After weighing the flour, combine with the other dry ingredients, such as salt and baking powder, stirring well. Separately combine the wet ingredients. Using a flexible spatula, slowly incorporate the dry ingredients into the wet and stir just until it's evenly moistened throughout.

3 DON'T OVERWORK THE DOUGH; GIVE IT TIME TO REST. The dough will be clumpy at this point, just as it should be. Don't knead it, but simply gather it up, gently press into a disc, wrap, and let rest in the refrigerator so the glutens will relax.

4 ROLL IT. This is a delicate dough, so it's easiest to roll out to an even thickness between sheets of plastic wrap. This prevents the dough from sticking to the surface and tearing as you go.

All-Purpose Light Piecrust

5 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1¼ cups)
1 teaspoon sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon baking powder
¼ cup vegetable shortening
4 teaspoons unsalted butter, melted
¼ cup boiling water

1. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine flour, sugar, salt, and baking powder in a bowl; cut in shortening with a pastry blender until mixture resembles coarse meal.
2. Make a well in center of flour mixture. Combine butter and boiling water. Pour butter mixture into center of well. Gently draw flour mixture into butter mixture until moist clumps form. Press dough into a 4-inch circle. Cover, and chill 30 minutes.
3. Slightly overlap 2 sheets of plastic wrap. Unwrap dough; place on plastic. Cover dough with 2 additional sheets of overlapping plastic wrap. Roll dough into a 13-inch circle. Yield: 1 piecrust (8 servings).

(Totals are for entire piecrust) **CALORIES** 1,018; **FAT** 56.3g (sat 22.6g, mono 24.9g, poly 5.4g); **PROTEIN** 14.8g; **CARB** 112.6g; **FIBER** 3.8g; **CHOL** 40mg; **IRON** 6.7mg; **SODIUM** 1,172mg; **CALC** 112mg

Chive Piecrust variation:
Prepare All-Purpose Light Piecrust, omitting sugar. Add 2 tablespoons minced fresh chives to flour mixture. Yield: 1 piecrust (8 servings).

CALORIES 125; **FAT** 7g (sat 2.8g, mono 3.1g, poly 0.7g); **PROTEIN** 1.9g; **CARB** 13.6g; **FIBER** 1g; **CHOL** 5mg; **IRON** 0.9mg; **SODIUM** 147mg; **CALC** 15mg

Spiced Pumpkin Chiffon Pie

All-Purpose Light Piecrust dough
Cooking spray
1¼ cups canned pumpkin
½ cup packed brown sugar
¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon grated lemon rind
¼ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 large egg yolks
⅔ cup evaporated low-fat milk
1 envelope unflavored gelatin
¼ cup fresh orange juice
2 large egg whites
⅛ teaspoon cream of tartar
5 tablespoons granulated sugar, divided
3 tablespoons water
½ cup heavy whipping cream
½ ounce shaved bittersweet chocolate

1. Preheat oven to 400°.
2. Remove 2 sheets of plastic from All-Purpose Light Piecrust dough. Fit dough, plastic wrap side up, into a 9-inch pie plate coated with cooking spray. Remove top sheets of plastic wrap. Fold edges under; flute. Pierce bottom and sides of dough with a fork; freeze 10 minutes. Line bottom of dough with a piece of foil; arrange pie weights or dried beans on foil. Bake at 400° for 25 minutes or until browned. Remove weights and foil. Cool completely on a wire rack.
3. Combine pumpkin and next 6 ingredients (through egg yolks) in a medium saucepan, stirring with a whisk. Stir in milk; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer 4 minutes or until slightly thick, stirring frequently. Remove from heat. Sprinkle gelatin over orange juice in a small microwave-safe bowl; let stand 1 minute. Microwave at HIGH 15 seconds, stirring until gelatin dissolves. Stir gelatin mixture into pumpkin mixture. Cool.
4. Place 2 egg whites and cream of tartar in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at high speed until frothy. Gradually add 1 tablespoon granulated sugar, beating until soft peaks form. Combine remaining ¼ cup granulated sugar and 3 tablespoons water in a saucepan; bring to a boil. Cook, without stirring, until candy thermometer registers 250°. Pour hot sugar syrup in a thin stream over egg whites, beating at high speed until stiff peaks form. Gently stir one-fourth of egg white mixture into pumpkin mixture; gently fold in remaining egg white mixture. Pour into cooled crust. Refrigerate 4 hours or until set.
5. Place cream in a medium bowl; beat with a mixer at high speed until soft peaks form. Spread evenly over pie; top with chocolate. Cut into wedges. Yield: 10 servings (serving size: 1 wedge).

CALORIES 274; **FAT** 13.2g (sat 5.8g, mono 3.8g, poly 1.6g); **PROTEIN** 5.3g; **CARB** 34.5g; **FIBER** 1.4g; **CHOL** 63mg; **IRON** 1.5mg; **SODIUM** 173mg; **CALC** 82mg

Caramelized Onion and Canadian Bacon Tart

All-Purpose Light Piecrust dough (page 94)
Cooking spray
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
4 cups thinly sliced Spanish onion (about 1¾ pounds)
2 teaspoons sugar
¾ cup water, divided
½ cup diced Canadian bacon
1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1¾ teaspoons freshly ground black pepper, divided
1 teaspoon kosher salt
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
½ teaspoon dried sage leaves
⅛ teaspoon ground whole nutmeg
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1½ cups herb-seasoned stuffing mix (such as Pepperidge Farm)
½ cup fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
1 cup (4 ounces) shredded Jarlsberg cheese

1. Preheat oven to 400°.
2. Remove 2 sheets plastic wrap from All-Purpose Light Piecrust. Fit dough, plastic wrap side up, into a 9-inch round tart pan coated with cooking spray. Remove top sheets of plastic wrap. Press dough into bottom and up sides of pan; fold excess crust back in, and press to reinforce sides. Pierce bottom and sides of dough lightly with a fork; freeze 10 minutes. Line bottom of dough with a piece of foil; arrange pie weights or dried beans on foil. Bake at 400° for 20 minutes or until lightly browned.
3. Reduce oven temperature to 375°.
4. Remove weights and foil. Brush dough evenly with mustard. Bake an additional 5 minutes or until done. Cool completely on a wire rack.
5. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and sugar; reduce heat, and cook 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in ½ cup water; cook 25 minutes or until onion is light brown and liquid thickens, adding remaining ¼ cup water, 1 tablespoon at a time, as necessary. Remove from heat; stir in bacon, parsley, 1 teaspoon pepper, and next 4 ingredients (through nutmeg).
6. Place butter in a microwave-safe bowl; microwave at HIGH for 30 seconds or until butter melts. Add remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil, stirring to combine. Combine butter mixture, remaining ¾ teaspoon pepper, stuffing mix, and broth, stirring until moist.
7. Sprinkle cooled crust with cheese. Spoon onion mixture over cheese; top with stuffing mixture. Place tart on a baking sheet. Bake at 375° for 25 minutes or until golden brown. Cool 10 minutes on a wire rack. Cut into wedges. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1 wedge).

CALORIES 293; **FAT** 16.9g (sat 7g, mono 7.4g, poly 1.4g); **PROTEIN** 10g; **CARB** 26.7g; **FIBER** 1.8g; **CHOL** 27mg; **IRON** 1.5mg; **SODIUM** 705mg; **CALC** 165mg

Mushroom and Roasted Pepper Tarts

Chive Piecrust dough (page 94)
Cooking spray
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 cup boiling water
½ cup dried porcini mushrooms (about ½ ounce)
1 tablespoon canola oil
2 tablespoons chopped shallots
4 ounces cremini mushrooms, thinly sliced
3½ ounces shiitake mushroom caps, thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, minced
2 tablespoons Madeira wine
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¾ teaspoon kosher salt
3 tablespoons grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, divided
½ cup 2% reduced-fat evaporated milk
2 tablespoons half-and-half
1 large egg
1 large egg white
⅓ cup chopped bottled roasted red bell peppers
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh chives

1. Preheat oven to 400°.

2. Divide Chive Piecrust dough into 5 equal portions. Place each portion between two sheets of plastic wrap; roll into a 6-inch circle. Remove top sheet of plastic wrap. Place each dough circle, plastic wrap side up, into a 4-inch round tart pan coated with cooking spray. Remove remaining plastic wrap. Press dough into bottom and up sides of pan; fold excess crust back in, and press. Pierce bottom and sides of dough lightly with a fork; freeze 10 minutes. Line bottoms of dough with foil; top with pie weights or dried beans. Bake at 400° for 25 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on a wire rack 15 minutes; remove weights and foil. Brush crusts with mustard.

3. Reduce oven temperature to 375°.

4. Combine 1 cup boiling water and porcini mushrooms in a bowl; cover and let stand 20 minutes. Strain mixture through a sieve over a bowl, reserving mushrooms and ¼ cup liquid. Finely chop mushrooms.

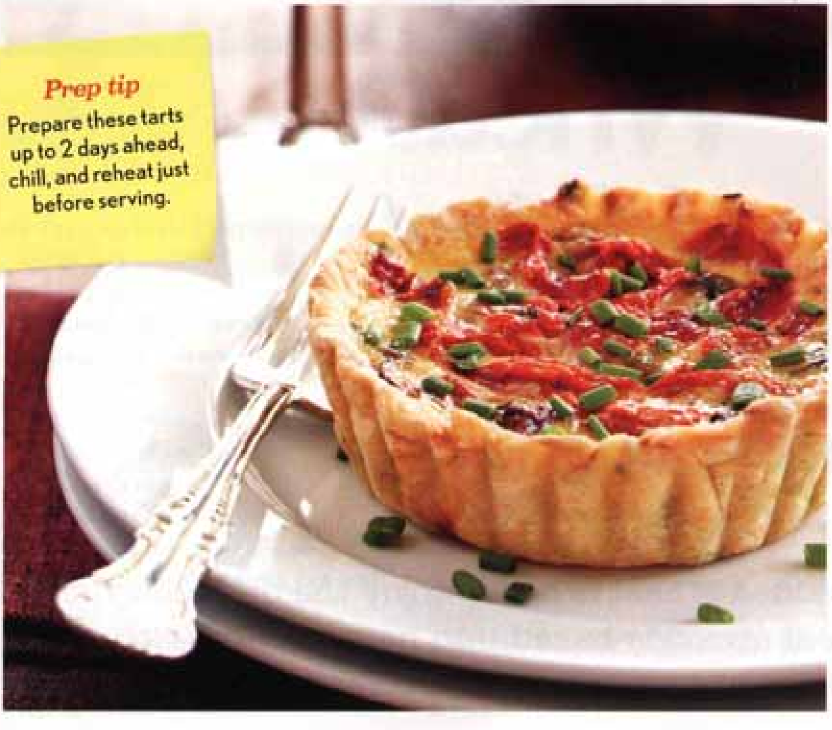
5. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add shallots; cook 1 minute. Add cremini and shiitake mushrooms; cook 8 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add garlic; cook 1 minute, stirring occasionally. Stir in porcini mushrooms, wine, and thyme; cook 1 minute. Add reserved ¼ cup soaking liquid, scraping pan to loosen browned bits. Reduce heat; cook 3 minutes. Stir in parsley, juice, pepper, and salt.

6. Divide mushroom mixture evenly among prepared crusts. Combine 2 tablespoons cheese and next 4 ingredients (through egg white), stirring with a whisk; divide mixture evenly among tarts. Sprinkle tops evenly with bell peppers and remaining cheese. Place tarts on a baking sheet. Bake at 375° for 35 minutes or until set. Cool on a wire rack 10 minutes. Sprinkle with chives. Yield: 5 servings (serving size: 1 tart).

CALORIES 332; **FAT** 17.2g (sat 6.3g, mono 7.4g, poly 2.1g); **PROTEIN** 10.6g; **CARB** 31.1g; **FIBER** 2.5g; **CHOL** 57mg; **IRON** 2.9mg; **SODIUM** 708mg; **CALC** 165mg

Prep tip

Prepare these tarts up to 2 days ahead, chill, and reheat just before serving.



Vary the flavor
Try this pie with apples in place of pears, and raisins or currants in lieu of cranberries.

Gingery Cranberry-Pear Pie with Oatmeal Streusel

Pie:

- 1 cup water
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1 (1-inch) piece peeled fresh ginger, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 1 teaspoon grated orange rind
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 6 peeled Anjou pears, cored and cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices (about 3 pounds)
- 1.13 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1/4 cup)
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- All-Purpose Light Piecrust dough (page 94)
- Cooking spray

Streusel:

- 1.5 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1/3 cup)
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 1 cup old-fashioned oats
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

1. Position oven rack to lowest third of oven. Preheat oven to 400°.

2. To prepare pie, combine 1 cup water and granulated sugar in a small saucepan over medium-high heat; bring to a boil. Add cranberries, fresh ginger slices, and rind; return to a boil, stirring until sugar dissolves. Reduce heat to low, and simmer 15 minutes or until liquid is reduced to 2 tablespoons. Remove from heat; discard ginger slices. Cool.

3. Combine lemon juice and pears in a large bowl; toss. Weigh or lightly spoon 1.13 ounces flour into a dry measuring cup; level with a knife. Combine 1.13 ounces flour and 1/3 cup brown sugar. Add flour mixture to pear mixture; toss to coat. Stir in cranberry mixture.

4. Remove 2 sheets plastic from All-Purpose Light Piecrust dough. Fit dough, plastic wrap side up, into a 9-inch pie plate coated with cooking spray. Remove top sheets of plastic wrap. Fold edges under; flute. Spoon pear mixture into prepared crust.

5. To prepare streusel, weigh or lightly spoon 1.5 ounces flour into a dry measuring cup; level with a knife. Combine butter and orange juice in a bowl, stirring well. Add flour, oats, and remaining ingredients; toss. Sprinkle oat mixture over pear mixture. Cover pie loosely with foil; place pie plate on a baking sheet. Bake, covered, in the lower third of oven at 400° for 1 hour. Uncover; bake 15 minutes or until browned. Cool on a wire rack 1 hour. Yield: 12 servings (serving size: 1 wedge).

CALORIES 300; **FAT** 7.4g (sat 3.2g, mono 2.7g, poly 0.8g); **PROTEIN** 3.3g; **CARB** 58.5g; **FIBER** 5g; **CHOL** 8mg; **IRON** 1.7mg; **SODIUM** 154mg; **CALC** 38mg

—Carole Walter

The power of positive drinking

A cocktail (or beer or wine) can be as good for your body as it is for your frame of mind.

True story: The National Institutes of Health blocked publication of a 1972 report showing that moderate alcohol consumption reduced rates of heart disease deaths, according to Curt Ellison, MD, an investigator with the Framingham Heart Study. Apparently, they were worried that most folks couldn't be trusted not to drive to the nearest bar and start guzzling. Fortunately, we're getting the moderation message. Today we drink about one-third less than our martinis-with-lunch forebears. And evidence about the benefits of alcohol is so strong it can no longer be ignored. A rational person might conclude it's almost the new aspirin—take one drink a day. We're not suggesting that everyone start drinking, but if you do and do so responsibly, then this one's for you.

PARTY MIX: (from left) Rosemary Lemon Drop, Newfangled Old-Fashioned, Sparkling Pomegranate Cocktail, and Hot Buttered Vanilla Rum.

ALCOHOL: THE GOOD & THE BAD

■ CAN LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE LEVELS. More than four drinks a day raises blood pressure, say Brigham and Women's Hospital researchers. Too much alcohol may impact the muscles in blood vessels, increasing blood pressure. Stay under four drinks, though, and blood pressure levels drop.

■ TAMPS DOWN INFLAMMATION. Data from a large European study found that drinking about 1.5 ounces of wine or beer a day seems to suppress the creation of proteins connected with inflammation, a marker of heart disease.

■ BUILDS HEALTHIER BONES. Tufts University researchers found that among nearly 3,000 people, moderate alcohol intake improved bone density. They aren't sure why, but it may be caused by a boost in estrogen levels that can help reduce bone loss.

■ HELPS YOU STAY OUT OF DIABETIC DANGER. In a six-year-long Dutch study of 16,000 women, those who consumed more alcohol had less diabetic risk. Alcohol may increase insulin sensitivity, a key factor in maintaining normal blood sugar levels.

■ KEEPS YOUR BRAIN STRONG. Compared with not drinking, having one to six drinks per week reduced the risk of dementia by 54 percent in a Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center study. This amount lowered the risk of brain lesions; researchers also speculate the social nature of drinking may help keep the brain healthy.

■ REDUCES RISK OF RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS. A Swedish study found that people who drank the most alcohol had a 40 to 50 percent decreased risk of rheumatoid arthritis compared to those who drink the least.

■ LINKED WITH CERTAIN CANCERS. Harvard data from nearly 500,000 people found that those who consumed two to three drinks daily raised their risk for colon cancer by 14 percent over non-drinkers. And earlier this year, a U.K. study of 1.2 million women linked alcohol to breast cancer risk.

■ HURTS AND KILLS WHEN MISUSED. Aside from social and economic damage caused by abuse and alcoholism, 75,000 preventable deaths per year are attributed to alcohol.

—Sara Vigneri

BEST AND WORST PARTY SNACKS
Katherine Brooking, MS, RD, gives party food pointers.
CookingLight.com /features

Newfangled Old-Fashioned

We shaved almost 30 calories per drink from the original, but this version's flavor is just as assertive. One serving equals about two liquor portions (see sidebar at right).

1 cup premium bourbon or rye whiskey
1/4 cup 100% cherry juice (not sour)
2 teaspoons Angostura bitters
Ice
4 (2-inch) orange rind strips (optional)
4 maraschino cherries (optional)

1. Combine 1 cup bourbon, cherry juice, and 2 teaspoons bitters in a cocktail shaker. Divide bourbon mixture evenly among 4 tumblers filled with ice. Garnish each serving with 1 rind strip and 1 cherry, if desired. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: about ½ cup).

CALORIES 167; **FAT** 0g; **PROTEIN** 0g; **CARB** 4.1g; **FIBER** 0g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 0.1mg; **SODIUM** 2mg; **CALC** 3mg

Rosemary Lemon Drop

A serving of this zingy cocktail provides 20 percent of your daily vitamin C needs.

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
3/4 cup water
2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary
1 cup vodka
3/4 cup fresh lemon juice (5 lemons)
Crushed ice
Rosemary sprigs (optional)

1. Bring first 3 ingredients to a boil in a small saucepan, stirring just until sugar dissolves. Cover and remove from heat; let stand for 20 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve over a bowl, reserving liquid; discard solids. Cover and chill.
2. Combine chilled syrup, vodka, and juice. Pour over ice in a martini shaker; shake to combine. Strain into 6 martini glasses; garnish with rosemary, if desired. Yield: 6 servings (serving size: about ½ cup).

CALORIES 238; **FAT** 0g; **PROTEIN** 0.1g; **CARB** 40.1g; **FIBER** 0.1g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 0mg; **SODIUM** 1mg; **CALC** 3mg

Hot Buttered Vanilla Rum

We strike just the right balance of boozy rum and sugar. A spot of butter rounds out flavors and keeps saturated fat in check.

1 1/2 cups water
2 tablespoons sugar
1 vanilla bean
1 (2-inch) piece lemon rind
1 cup dark rum
1 tablespoon butter

1. Bring first 4 ingredients to a boil in a small saucepan. Remove from heat; cover and let stand 15 minutes. Strain mixture through a fine sieve over a bowl, reserving liquid; discard solids. Return water mixture to pan. Add rum and butter to pan; bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring until butter melts. Serve immediately. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: ½ cup).

CALORIES 178; **FAT** 2.8g (sat 1.8g, mono 0.7g, poly 0.1g); **PROTEIN** 0g; **CARB** 6g; **FIBER** 0g; **CHOL** 8mg; **IRON** 0.1mg; **SODIUM** 21mg; **CALC** 1mg

DO YOU OVERPOUR?

Because excessive alcohol intake is harmful, portion control is important. Pours vary wildly in U.S. bars and restaurants, from state-mandated 1.5-ounce shots in cocktails to the gigantic steak house gin baths that lubricate expense accounts. Meanwhile, even at home, you might be pouring more than you think.

Try this experiment: Pour what you'd deem a typical serving of wine into your favorite glass, then pour the contents of the glass into a liquid measure. When we tried it, we were surprised to discover that 60 percent of our staff were underpourers (about 4.5 ounces), while 40 percent routinely overpour (6.75 ounces, on average). Overpour to the tune of 8 ounces, as one of us did, and two of your servings will total more than three servings.

SPIRITS

1.5 fluid ounces

For liquor, spirits, or liqueurs, a shot-sized serving is a perfectly portioned nightcap.

WINE

5 fluid ounces

Keep wine pours prudent by using smaller glasses instead of oversized, bowl-like ones.

BEER

12 fluid ounces

Servings add up quickly with premium beers that come in pint-sized (16-ounce) bottles.

Sparkling Pomegranate Cocktail

The fruit's polyphenols, a class of antioxidants, likely help your heart. They contribute to the vibrant flavor, too.

1½ cups pomegranate juice
¼ cup grenadine
1 (750-milliliter) bottle Prosecco or dry sparkling wine, chilled
6 lime slices (optional)
Pomegranate seeds (optional)

1. Combine pomegranate juice and ¼ cup grenadine in a 2-cup glass measure. Divide the juice mixture evenly among 6 Champagne flutes or wineglasses. Top each serving evenly with wine, and garnish each serving with lime slices and seeds, if desired. Yield: 6 servings (serving size: about ¾ cup).

CALORIES 164; **FAT** 0g; **PROTEIN** 0.3g; **CARB** 21g; **FIBER** 0.3g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 0.1mg; **SODIUM** 11mg; **CALC** 11mg

–Recipes by Jill Silverman Hough

egg tested

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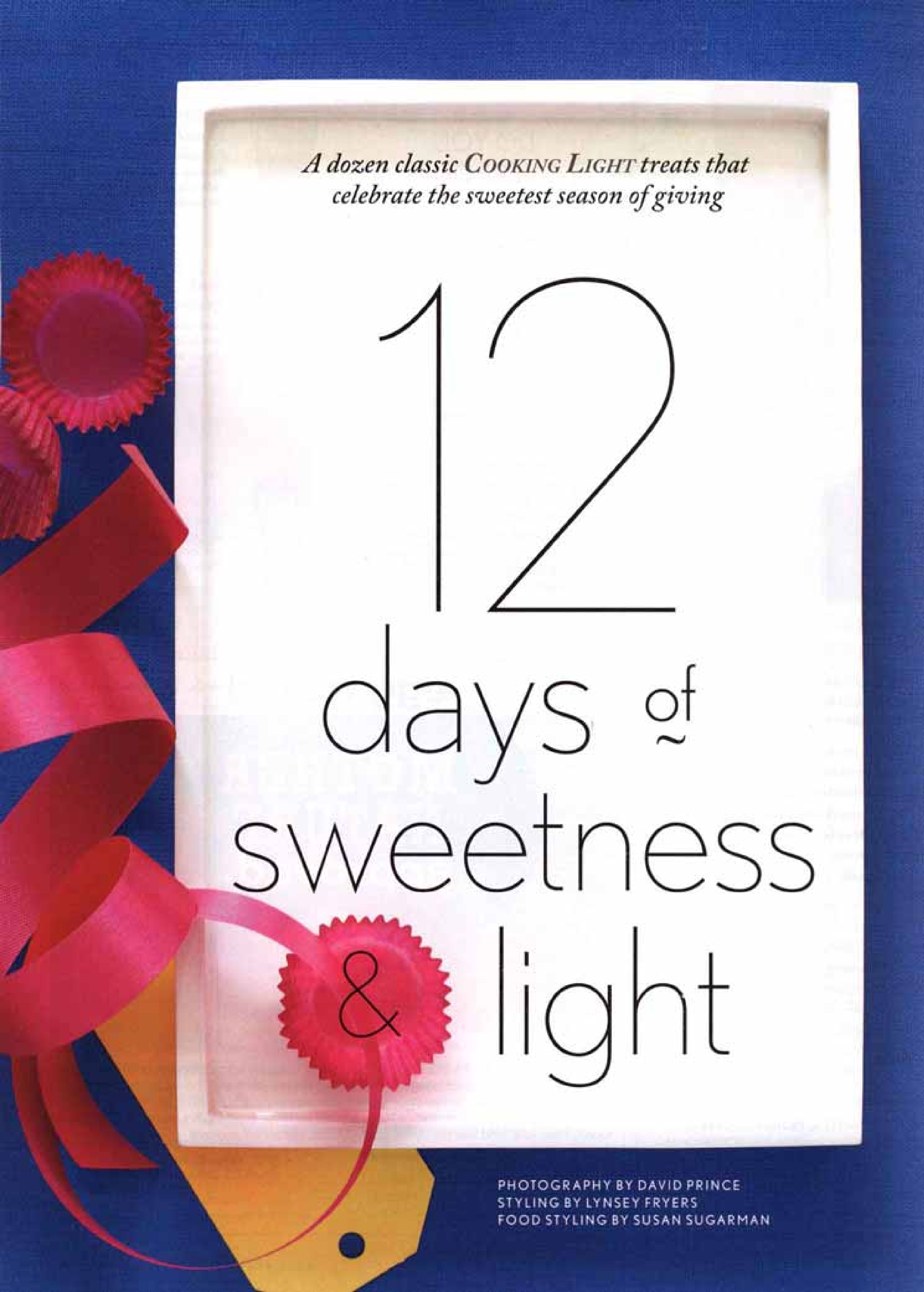


A dozen classic COOKING LIGHT treats that celebrate the sweetest season of giving

12 days of sweetness & light

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID PRINCE
STYLING BY LYNSEY FRYERS
FOOD STYLING BY SUSAN SUGARMAN

1-2-3

Two Bars and a Serving of Crunch: Chocolate-Drizzled Mandelbrot, Pecan-Date Bars, and Raspberry-Cream Cheese Brownies

MAKE AHEAD: 2 days **KEEPS FOR:** 3 days **NUMBER SERVED:** 16 to 24 people

Mandelbrot one-up biscotti with their sweet almond-laced dough. Low-maintenance bar cookies allow for pecans suspended in gooey sweetness or a berry-cream cheese swirl. **Recipes on pages 118–120**

Cranberry Cosmopolitan

What's Better Gift-Boxed than Popcorn Brittle?

MAKE AHEAD: 1 day **KEEPS FOR:** 3 days **NUMBER SERVED:** 12 people

You'll have a hard time parting with this crunchy candy. Our sophisticated riff on caramel corn also has a more grown-up flavor profile with a little peppery molasses. **Recipe on page 124**

4 Cranberry Liqueur Makes a Holiday-Hued Cosmo

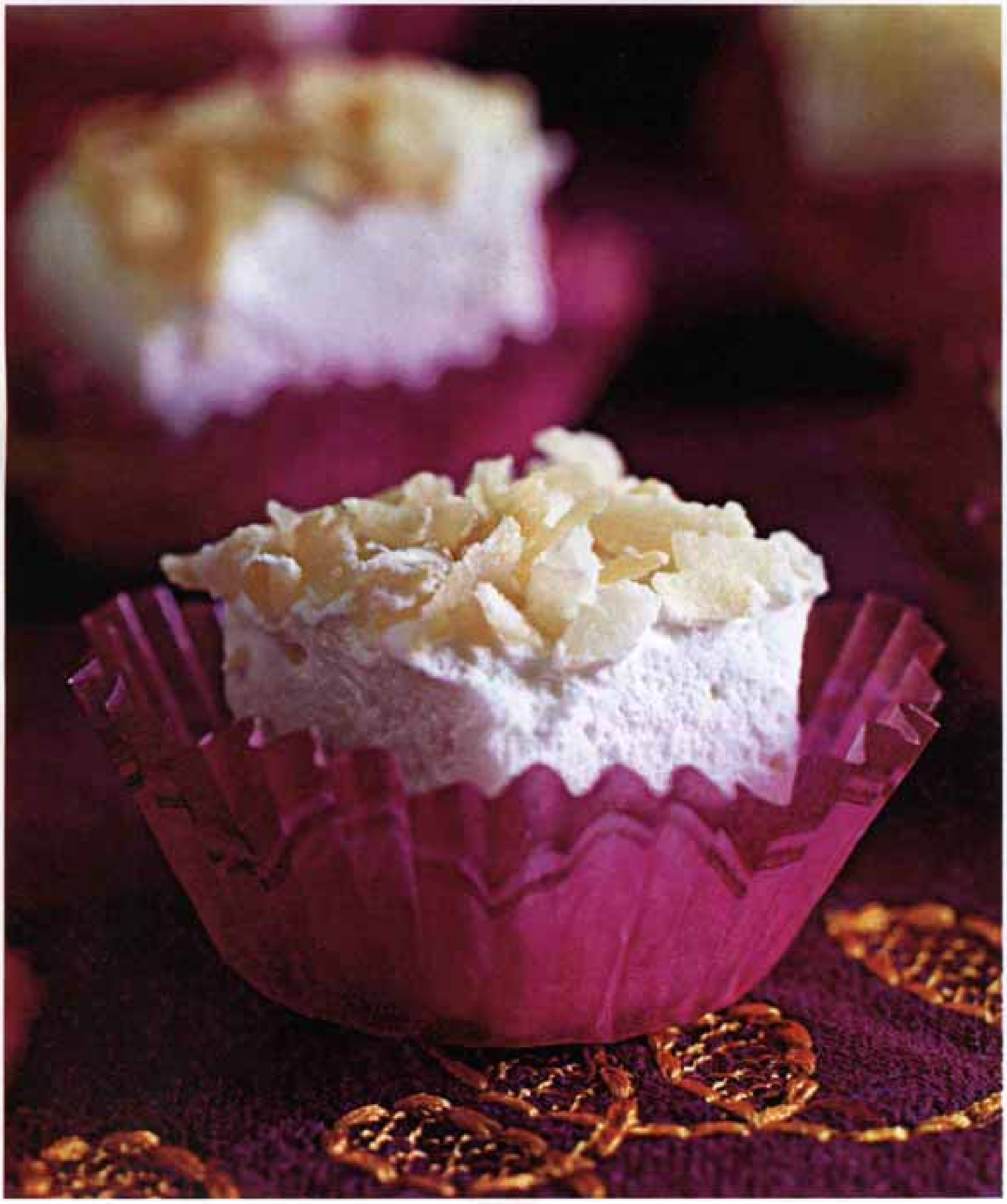
MAKE AHEAD: 3 weeks **KEEPS FOR:** 1 year **NUMBER SERVED:** 18 people

Your patience when making this fruity, puckery liqueur will be rewarded when you see the gleam in the eye of the recipient. (Or when you make a festive cosmopolitan.) **Recipe on page 122**

6 Satiny-Soft Luxury of Toasted Coconut Marshmallows

MAKE AHEAD: 1 day **KEEPS FOR:** 1 day **NUMBER SERVED:** 32 people

Try a homemade marshmallow, and you'll be a lifelong convert. Friends will swoon over the pure flavor and fluffy texture, and they'll think you're a baking rock star. Recipe on page 120



Orange-Pecan Tea Bread for a Tree-side Chat 7

MAKE AHEAD: 2 days **KEEPS FOR:** 4 days **NUMBER SERVED:** 14 people

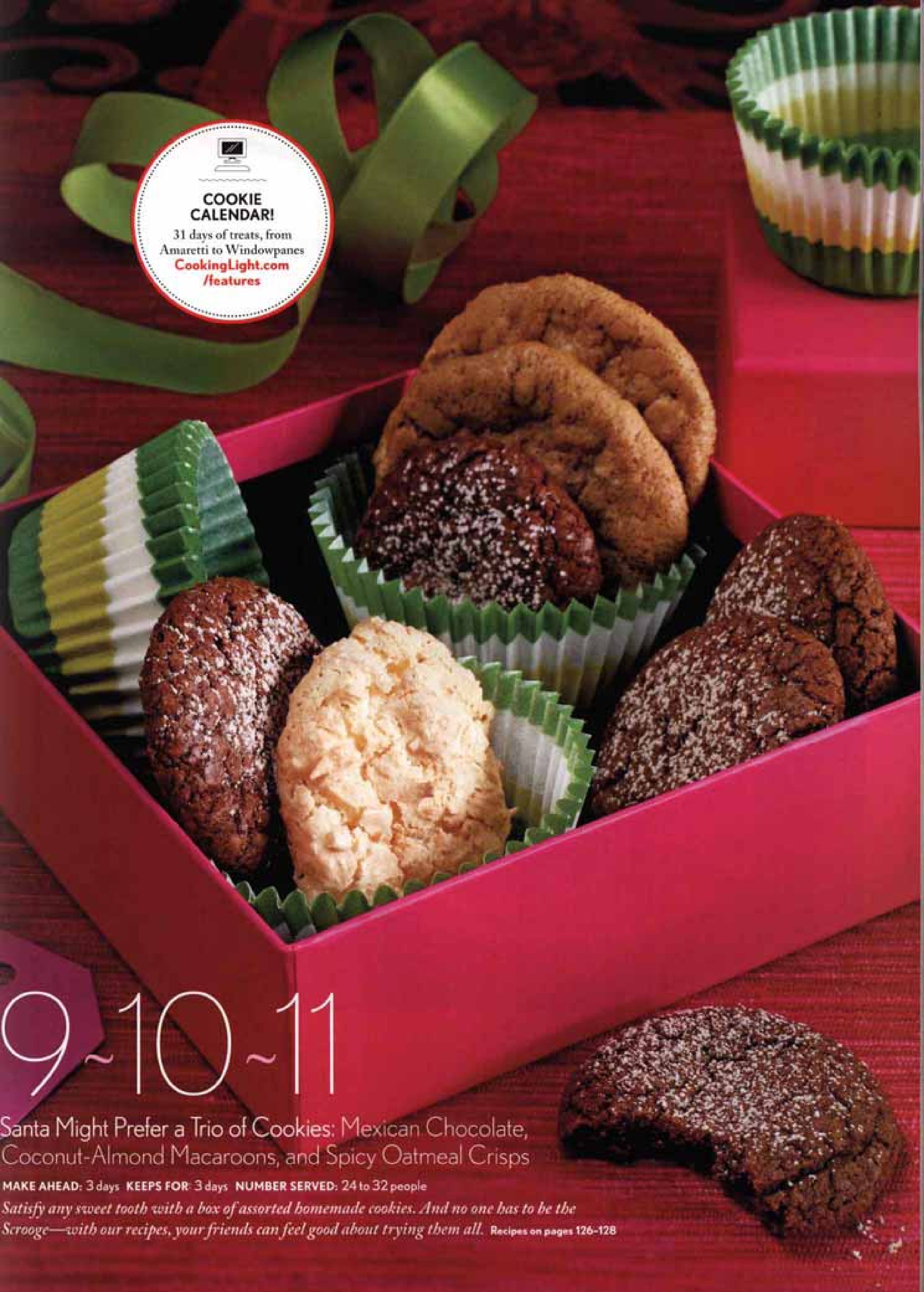
A simple, spicy quick bread partners well with coffee. This one's promise of a sweet glaze and nutty topping means you'll be watching the clock, anticipating an afternoon break. Recipe on page 122

8

Sweet Challah, Sweet Hanukkah

MAKE AHEAD: 1 day **KEEPS FOR:** 1 day **NUMBER SERVED:** 12 people

We holler for challah at the holidays. A rich, yeasty dough that's braided and baked with a glistening glaze will please any bread lover. **Recipe on page 124**



9~10~11

Santa Might Prefer a Trio of Cookies: Mexican Chocolate, Coconut-Almond Macaroons, and Spicy Oatmeal Crisps

MAKE AHEAD: 3 days **KEEPS FOR:** 3 days **NUMBER SERVED:** 24 to 32 people

Satisfy any sweet tooth with a box of assorted homemade cookies. And no one has to be the Scrooge—with our recipes, your friends can feel good about trying them all. Recipes on pages 126–128

12

For a Winter Day, a Little Jar of Sun: Lemon Curd

MAKE AHEAD: 2 days **KEEPS FOR:** 5 days **NUMBER SERVED:** 2 (1¼-cup) gifts

You won't have switches in your stocking when you give this luxurious lemon curd paired with a fresh-from-the-bakery loaf of bread. **Recipe on page 128**

Chocolate-Drizzled Mandelbrot

Mandelbrot are crunchy cookies similar to Italian biscotti. They always contain almonds ("mandelbrot" is German for "almond bread"); we add dried cherries for sweet-tart notes and a drizzle of chocolate for richness.

7.75 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1¾ cups)
1½ teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
¾ cup sugar
¼ cup butter, softened
2 large eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
½ cup chopped dried cherries
½ cup finely chopped almonds, toasted
¼ cup dark chocolate chips
1 teaspoon light-colored corn syrup
1 teaspoon water

1. Preheat oven to 325°.
2. Weigh or lightly spoon 7.75 ounces (about 1¾ cups) flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine flour, baking powder, and salt, stirring with a whisk.
3. Combine sugar and butter in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at medium speed until well blended. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Add flour mixture to sugar mixture; beat until combined. Stir in cherries and almonds.
4. Shape dough into 2 (9-inch-long) rolls. Place rolls on a baking sheet covered with parchment paper; pat to 1-inch thickness. Bake at 325° for 30 minutes or until rolls are golden. Cool on baking sheet 10 minutes.
5. Cut each roll diagonally into 12 (½-inch-thick) slices. Place, cut sides down, on baking sheet. Bake at 325° for 15 minutes. Turn cookies over, and bake an additional 10 minutes (cookies will be slightly soft in center but will harden as they cool). Remove from sheet; cool completely on a wire rack.
6. Combine chocolate chips, corn syrup, and 1 teaspoon water in a small bowl. Microwave at HIGH 10 seconds at a time until nearly melted; stir until smooth. Spoon chocolate mixture into a small zip-top plastic bag; seal. Snip a tiny hole in 1 corner of bag. Drizzle chocolate over cookies. Yield: 24 servings (serving size: 1 cookie).

~

CALORIES 117; **FAT** 4.1g (sat 1.8g, mono 1.1g, poly 0.4g); **PROTEIN** 2.1g; **CARB** 17.7g; **FIBER** 0.7g; **CHOL** 23mg; **IRON** 0.6mg; **SODIUM** 74mg; **CALC** 27mg

Raspberry-Cream Cheese Brownies

Filling:
⅓ cup sugar
⅓ cup (3 ounces) ⅓-less-fat cream cheese, softened
2 teaspoons all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 large egg white

Brownies:
Cooking spray
3.4 ounces all-purpose flour (about ¾ cup)
¼ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon baking soda
⅛ teaspoon salt
1 cup sugar
⅔ cup unsweetened cocoa
¼ cup butter, melted
1 tablespoon water
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 large egg
2 large egg whites
3 tablespoons raspberry preserves

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. To prepare filling, place first 5 ingredients in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at medium speed until well blended. Set aside.
3. To prepare brownies, coat the bottom of an 8-inch baking pan with cooking spray (do not coat the sides of the pan). Weigh or lightly spoon 3.4 ounces (about ¾ cup) flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a medium bowl. Combine 1 cup sugar and next 6 ingredients (through 2 egg whites), stirring well with a whisk. Add to flour mixture, stirring just until moist. Spread two-thirds of batter in bottom of prepared pan. Pour filling over batter, spreading evenly. Carefully drop the remaining batter and preserves by spoonfuls over filling; swirl together using the tip of a knife to marble. Bake at 350° for 40 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out almost clean. Cool on a wire rack. Yield: 16 servings (serving size: 1 brownie).

~

CALORIES 153; **FAT** 4.9g (sat 3g, mono 1g, poly 0.2g); **PROTEIN** 3g; **CARB** 26.2g; **FIBER** 1.4g; **CHOL** 25mg; **IRON** 0.9mg; **SODIUM** 105mg; **CALC** 17mg

Pecan-Date Bars

You can prepare and refrigerate these luscious pecan pie-like bars a day or two in advance. They are actually easier to cut once they have been completely chilled.

Crust:
4.5 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1 cup)
1/3 cup packed brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup chilled butter, cut into small pieces
Cooking spray
Filling:
3/4 cup dark corn syrup
1/3 cup packed brown sugar
1/4 cup egg substitute
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon bourbon
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 large egg
1/2 cup chopped pitted dates
1/3 cup chopped pecans, toasted
2 tablespoons semisweet chocolate minichips

1. Preheat oven to 400°.
2. To prepare crust, weigh or lightly spoon 4.5 ounces (about 1 cup) flour into a dry measuring cup; level with a knife. Combine 4.5 ounces flour, ⅓ cup sugar, and ¼ teaspoon salt, stirring well with a whisk. Cut in butter with a pastry blender or two knives until mixture resembles coarse meal. Press mixture into the bottom of an 11 x 7–inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Bake at 400° for 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool completely.
3. Reduce oven temperature to 350°.
4. To prepare filling, combine corn syrup and next 7 ingredients (through egg) in a large bowl, stirring well with a whisk. Stir in dates, pecans, and chocolate chips. Pour mixture over prepared crust. Bake at 350° for 35 minutes or until set. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Cover and chill 1 hour or until firm. Yield: 24 servings (serving size: 1 bar).

~

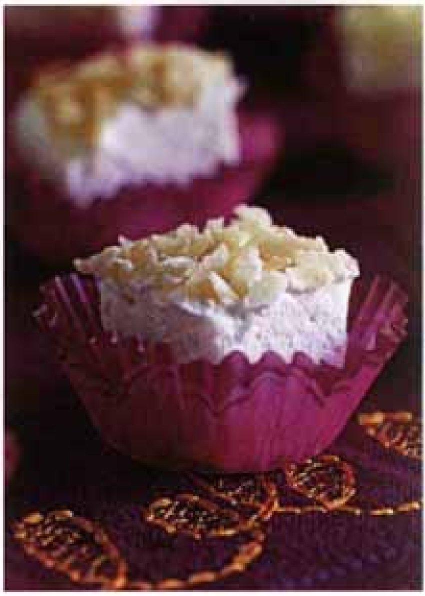
CALORIES 123; **FAT** 3.6g (sat 1.3g, mono 1.6g, poly 0.5g); **PROTEIN** 1.4g; **CARB** 22g; **FIBER** 0.7g; **CHOL** 14mg; **IRON** 0.6mg; **SODIUM** 89mg; **CALC** 13mg

Toasted Coconut Marshmallows

These are good as a snack or dropped into a mug of hot chocolate. The marshmallow mixture becomes thick and requires substantial beating time, so you'll want to use a heavy-duty stand mixer instead of a handheld mixer. Using a stand mixer also makes it safer (and easier) to incorporate the hot syrup.

Cooking spray
2 cups flaked sweetened coconut, toasted
2 1/2 envelopes unflavored gelatin (2 tablespoons plus 1 1/4 teaspoons)
3/4 cup cold water, divided
2 cups granulated sugar, divided
2/3 cup light-colored corn syrup
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 large egg whites
2/3 cup powdered sugar
3 tablespoons cornstarch

1. Line a 13 x 9–inch baking pan with heavy-duty plastic wrap, allowing plastic wrap to extend 1 inch over sides of pan. Lightly coat the plastic wrap with cooking spray. Spread coconut in an even layer in bottom of pan; set aside.
2. Sprinkle gelatin over ½ cup cold water in a small bowl; set aside.
3. Combine remaining ¼ cup water,



1¾ cups granulated sugar, and corn syrup in a large saucepan. Cook, without stirring, over medium-high heat until a candy thermometer registers 260° (about 15 minutes). Remove from heat; gradually stir in softened gelatin (mixture will appear foamy).
4. While sugar mixture cooks, beat the vanilla, salt, and egg whites at high speed in a heavy-duty stand mixer with whisk attachment until foamy. Gradually add remaining ¼ cup granulated sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, until stiff peaks form. Gradually pour in gelatin mixture, beating at high speed until very thick (about 5 minutes). Gently spread marshmallow mixture over coconut in prepared pan. Coat 1 side of another sheet of plastic wrap with cooking spray. Place plastic wrap, coated side down, over marshmallow mixture. Chill 8 hours or until firm.
5. Sprinkle powdered sugar and cornstarch over a cutting board. Remove top sheet of plastic wrap. Invert marshmallow mixture over powdered sugar mixture. Using a dough scraper, cut mixture into 1-inch squares. Store between sheets of wax or parchment paper in an airtight container. Yield: 8 dozen (serving size: 3 marshmallows).

~

CALORIES 96; **FAT** 1.5g (sat 1.4g, mono 0.1g, poly 0g); **PROTEIN** 0.8g; **CARB** 20.5g; **FIBER** 0.2g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 0.1mg; **SODIUM** 28mg; **CALC** 2mg

Orange-Pecan Tea Bread

A small amount of salt in a quick bread or cake batter balances its sweetness.

7.9 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1¾ cups)
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ground allspice
½ cup granulated sugar
½ cup low-fat buttermilk
¼ cup chopped pecans, toasted
3 tablespoons 1% low-fat milk
3 tablespoons canola oil
3 tablespoons orange marmalade
2 teaspoons grated orange rind
2 large eggs
Cooking spray
½ cup powdered sugar
1 tablespoon fresh orange juice
1½ teaspoons chopped pecans, toasted

1. Preheat oven to 350°.

2. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine flour and next 5 ingredients (through allspice) in a large bowl, stirring with a whisk; make a well in center of mixture. Combine granulated sugar and next 7 ingredients (through eggs), stirring with a whisk; add to flour mixture, stirring just until moist.

3. Spoon batter into an 8 x 4–inch loaf pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes in pan on a wire rack; remove from pan. Cool completely on a wire rack.

4. Combine powdered sugar and juice, stirring until smooth. Drizzle glaze over bread, and sprinkle with 1½ teaspoons pecans. Yield: 14 servings (serving size: 1 slice).

CALORIES 164; **FAT** 5.4g (sat 0.6g, mono 3.1g, poly 1.5g); **PROTEIN** 3g; **CARB** 26.6g; **FIBER** 0.6g; **CHOL** 26mg; **IRON** 1mg; **SODIUM** 136mg; **CALC** 46mg

Cranberry Liqueur

Give away this jewel-toned potion in small decanters or glass bottles. Drench homemade fruitcake with the liqueur, or drizzle it over ice cream and fruit for an instantly glamorous dessert. Or just sip it, chilled, in liqueur glasses.

2 cups sugar
1 cup water
1 (12-ounce) package fresh cranberries
3 cups vodka

1. Combine sugar and 1 cup water in a medium saucepan; cook over medium heat 5 minutes or until sugar dissolves, stirring constantly. Remove from heat, and cool completely.

2. Place cranberries in a food processor; process 2 minutes or until finely chopped. Combine sugar mixture and cranberries in a large bowl; stir in vodka.

3. Pour the vodka mixture into clean jars; secure with lids. Let stand 3 weeks in a cool, dark place, shaking every other day.

4. Strain the cranberry mixture through a cheesecloth-lined sieve into a bowl, and discard solids. Carefully pour liqueur into clean bottles or jars. Yield: 4½ cups (serving size: ¼ cup).

Note: Liqueur can be stored refrigerated or at room temperature for up to a year.

CALORIES 173; **FAT** 0g; **PROTEIN** 0g; **CARB** 22.5g; **FIBER** 0.1g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 0mg; **SODIUM** 0mg; **CALC** 0mg

Popcorn Brittle

While replacing the nuts in brittle with popcorn certainly removes a lot of calories, it also results in a wonderful hybrid—part caramel corn, part brittle. The brittle is crunchy and sweet, with just a hint of saltiness. About 1/4 cup kernels yields the correct amount of popcorn.

Cooking spray
5 1/2 cups popcorn, popped without salt or fat
1 1/2 cups sugar
6 tablespoons light-colored corn syrup
1/4 cup water
3 tablespoons molasses
1 tablespoon butter
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon salt

1. Line a baking sheet with foil; coat foil with cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Place popcorn in a large zip-top plastic bag; seal. Crush popcorn using a meat mallet or rolling pin; set aside.
3. Combine sugar, syrup, and 1/4 cup water in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Cook 1 minute or until sugar dissolves, stirring constantly. Cook, without stirring, until a candy thermometer registers 270° (about 8 minutes). Stir in molasses and butter; cook until thermometer registers 290° (about 5 minutes). Stir in baking soda, vanilla, and salt. Stir popcorn into boiling syrup mixture. Working quickly, pour popcorn mixture onto prepared pan; spread to 1/4-inch thickness using a wooden spoon coated with cooking spray. Cool completely; break into large pieces. Yield: 12 servings (serving size: about 1 1/2 ounces).

Note: Store brittle in an airtight container at room temperature for up to four days.

~

CALORIES 165; **FAT** 1.1g (sat 0.5g, mono 0.4g, poly 0.1g); **PROTEIN** 0.5g; **CARB** 39.9g; **FIBER** 0.6g; **CHOL** 3mg; **IRON** 0.4mg; **SODIUM** 123mg; **CALC** 12mg

Sweet Challah

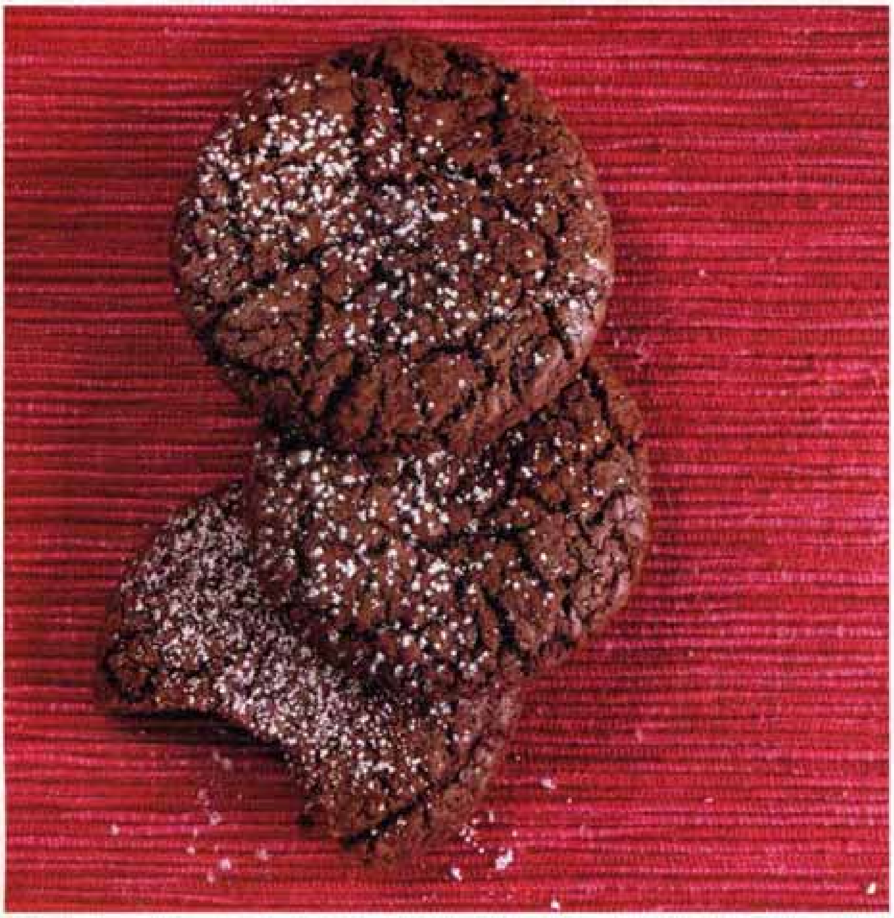
Allowing the dough to rise three times gives the yeast more time to develop, resulting in a rich, complex flavor. Although this bread is best eaten the day it's made, you can also bake it one day in advance. Cool the bread completely, wrap in plastic wrap, and then wrap in foil; store at room temperature. Leftovers make excellent bread pudding.

1 package dry yeast (about 2 1/4 teaspoons)
1 cup warm water (100° to 110°)
3 tablespoons honey
Dash of saffron threads, crushed
3 tablespoons butter, melted and cooled
1 teaspoon salt
1 large egg
14.25 ounces bread flour (about 3 cups), divided
Cooking spray
1 teaspoon cornmeal
1 teaspoon water
1 large egg yolk, lightly beaten
1/4 teaspoon poppy seeds

1. Dissolve yeast in 1 cup warm water in a large bowl; stir in honey and saffron threads. Let stand for 5 minutes. Add melted butter, salt, and egg; stir well with a whisk.
2. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Add 13 ounces (about 2 3/4 cups) flour to yeast mixture, and stir until a soft dough forms. Cover and let stand for 15 minutes.
3. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead until smooth and elastic (about 8 minutes); add enough of remaining flour, 1 tablespoon at a time, to prevent dough from sticking to hands (dough will be very soft).
4. Place dough in a large bowl coated with cooking spray, turning to coat top. Cover and let rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, 40 minutes or until doubled in size. (Gently press two fingers into dough. If indentation remains, the dough has risen enough.)
5. Punch dough down. Shape dough into a ball; return to bowl. Cover and let rise an additional 40 minutes or until doubled in size. Punch dough down; cover and let rest 15 minutes.
6. Divide dough into 3 equal portions. Working with 1 portion at a time (cover remaining dough to prevent drying), on a lightly floured surface, roll each portion into a 25-inch rope with slightly tapered ends. Place ropes lengthwise on a large baking sheet sprinkled with cornmeal; pinch ends together at untapered ends to seal. Braid ropes; pinch loose ends to seal. Cover and let rise 20 minutes or until almost doubled in size.
7. Preheat oven to 375°.
8. Combine 1 teaspoon water and egg yolk, stirring with a fork until blended. Uncover loaf, and gently brush with egg yolk mixture. Sprinkle evenly with poppy seeds. Bake at 375° for 30 minutes or until loaf sounds hollow when tapped. Cool on a wire rack. Yield: 1 loaf, 12 servings (serving size: 1 slice).

~

CALORIES 157; **FAT** 4.1g (sat 2.1g, mono 1.2g, poly 0.4g); **PROTEIN** 5g; **CARB** 26.9g; **FIBER** 0.9g; **CHOL** 42mg; **IRON** 1.7mg; **SODIUM** 222mg; **CALC** 7mg



Mexican Chocolate Cookies

These cookies—with bittersweet chocolate that mellows the ground peppers' heat—earned our Test Kitchen's highest rating. Dust with a little powdered sugar to serve.

5 ounces bittersweet (60 percent cacao) chocolate, coarsely chopped
3.4 ounces all-purpose flour (about 3/4 cup)
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
Dash of black pepper
Dash of ground red pepper
1 1/4 cups sugar
1/4 cup butter, softened
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Place chocolate in a small glass bowl; microwave at HIGH 1 minute or until almost melted, stirring until smooth. Cool to room temperature.
3. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into a dry measuring cup; level with a knife. Combine flour and next 5 ingredients (through ground red pepper); stir well with a whisk.
4. Combine sugar and butter in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at medium speed until well blended. Add egg; beat well. Add cooled chocolate and vanilla; beat just until blended. Add flour mixture; beat just until blended. Drop dough by level tablespoons 2 inches apart on baking sheets lined with parchment paper. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes or until almost set. Remove from oven. Cool on pans 2 minutes or until set. Remove from pans; cool completely on a wire rack. Yield: 32 cookies (serving size: 1 cookie).

~

CALORIES 80; **FAT** 2.9g (sat 1.7g, mono 0.6g, poly 0.1g); **PROTEIN** 0.7g; **CARB** 12.8g; **FIBER** 0.1g; **CHOL** 10mg; **IRON** 0.2mg; **SODIUM** 35mg; **CALC** 4mg

Coconut-Almond Macaroons

Look for canned almond paste alongside other baking ingredients at your market.

3 tablespoons almond paste
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
4 large egg whites, divided
1 1/3 cups powdered sugar
1 1/4 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
3 1/2 cups flaked sweetened coconut
1/2 cup granulated sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Combine almond paste, vanilla, and 2 egg whites in a large bowl; beat with a mixer until well blended. Combine powdered sugar, baking powder, and salt. Add powdered sugar mixture to almond paste mixture, beating until blended. Stir in coconut.
3. Place remaining 2 egg whites in a medium bowl; beat with a mixer at high speed until soft peaks form using clean, dry beaters. Gradually add granulated sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating until stiff peaks form. Gently fold egg white mixture into coconut mixture.
4. Drop dough by level tablespoons 2 inches apart onto baking sheets lined with parchment paper. Bake at 350° for 17 minutes or until firm. Cool on pans 2 to 3 minutes on a wire rack. Remove cookies from pan, and cool completely on wire rack. Yield: 32 macaroons (serving size: 1 macaroon).

~

CALORIES 74; **FAT** 2.7g (sat 2.2g, mono 0.4g, poly 0.1g); **PROTEIN** 0.8g; **CARB** 12.2g; **FIBER** 0.9g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 0.2mg; **SODIUM** 67mg; **CALC** 14mg

Spicy Oatmeal Crisps

Pepper may sound like an odd ingredient for a cookie, but it complements the other spices well.

3.4 ounces all-purpose flour (about 3/4 cup)
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
1/2 teaspoon grated whole nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper (optional)
1 cup packed brown sugar
5 tablespoons butter, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 large egg
1/2 cup old-fashioned rolled oats
Cooking spray

1. Preheat oven to 350°.

2. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine flour and next 7 ingredients (through pepper) in a medium bowl. Place sugar, butter, and vanilla in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at medium speed until light and fluffy. Add egg; beat well. Stir in flour mixture and oats.

3. Drop by level tablespoons 2 inches apart onto baking sheets coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350° for 12 minutes or until crisp. Cool on pans 2 to 3 minutes or until firm. Remove cookies from pan; cool on wire racks. Yield: 2 dozen (serving size: 1 cookie).

CALORIES 79; **FAT** 2.6g (sat 1.5g, mono 0.7g, poly 0.2g); **PROTEIN** 1.5g; **CARB** 13.2g; **FIBER** 0.4g; **CHOL** 15mg; **IRON** 0.5mg; **SODIUM** 58mg; **CALC** 12mg

Lemon Curd

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 cup fresh lemon juice (about 5 medium lemons)
3 large eggs
2 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind

1. Combine the first 3 ingredients in a medium, heavy saucepan, stirring with a whisk. Stir in juice and eggs; bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly with a whisk. Reduce heat, and simmer 1 minute or until thick, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; add butter and lemon rind, stirring gently until butter melts.

2. Spoon mixture into a medium bowl; cool. Cover and chill at least 6 hours or overnight (mixture will thicken as it cools). Yield: 2½ cups (serving size: 1 tablespoon).

CALORIES 35; **FAT** 1g (sat 0.5g, mono 0.3g, poly 0.1g); **PROTEIN** 0.5g; **CARB** 6.4g; **FIBER** 0g; **CHOL** 18mg; **IRON** 0mg; **SODIUM** 17mg; **CALC** 2mg

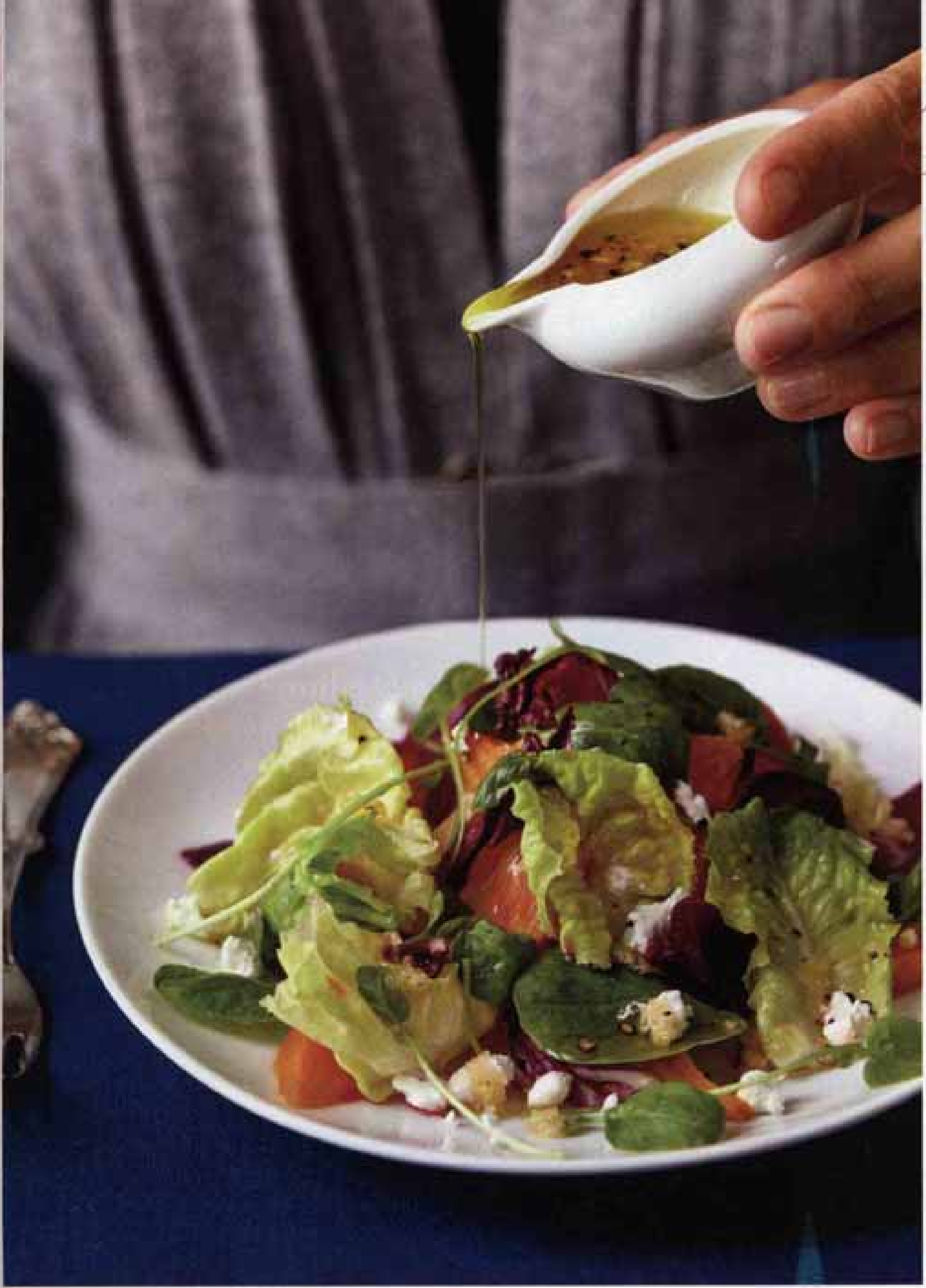
—Recipes by Alison Ashton, David Bonom, Maureen Callahan, Kathryn Conrad, Kathy Farrell-Kingsley, Julianna Grimes, Jean Kressy, Greg Patent, Elizabeth Taliaferro, and Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough

FROM
OUR
TABLE

TO YOUR TABLE

Cooking Light editors and staff were challenged to develop recipes that mix the new and the traditional, to ring all the right notes of the season. With joy we now present our very own holiday feast.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RANDY MAYOR
STYLING BY CINDY BARR
FOOD STYLING BY JAMIE KIMM



MENU

Winter Salad with Roasted Beets and Citrus Reduction Dressing

Crusty bakery bread

Crab Bisque

Brined Pork Loin with Brown Sugar-Bourbon Glaze

Cipollini and Apples with Bacon

Mashed Yukon Gold Potatoes with Horseradish Butter

Sherried Green Beans and Mushrooms

Roasted Pear Crème Brûlée Tart

German Chocolate Mousse

Working at a food magazine is heaven for food lovers, but it does mean we taste the equivalent of five to 10 holiday meals in a few short weeks every year, sifting through many dozens of contenders to find the recipes that are good enough to grace our pages. And each time we brace ourselves for holiday taste testings (in June, by the way), we face the same problem: How do we make Christmas dinner feel fresh while still honoring the traditions that make the holidays so important?

With this menu we offer our personal favorites and creative innovations: green beans with mushrooms but no canned soup in sight; mashed potatoes with the butter (imbued with horseradish) on the outside for more drama; and the familiar flavors of German chocolate cake, but in creamy mousse form.

We also want to remind folks that even though there's frost on the ground in many parts of the country, there are still spectacular examples of seasonal produce. So you'll find beets, citrus, apples, and pears sprinkled throughout these pages. We crafted recipes with vibrant colors, dishes that offer great pacing as you enjoy the meal: Some bites are creamy, rich, and indulgent, while others are crisp and fresh. And with visually stunning offerings like glazed rack of pork loin or brûléed pear tart, the mood is celebratory, beautiful, and stylish.

It's a meal we created for you, and after testing and tasting it ourselves, we know it's one that will have your guests oohing and aahing before they take the first bite.

The holidays are a time for luxury and elegance, both in the design of the menu and the ingredients that comprise it. This is the food you lavish on your guests, that you gladly go all out to prepare.

Crab Bisque
(this page) The rich seafood flavor and velvety texture make this one of our favorite bisques ever.
Recipe on page 138.

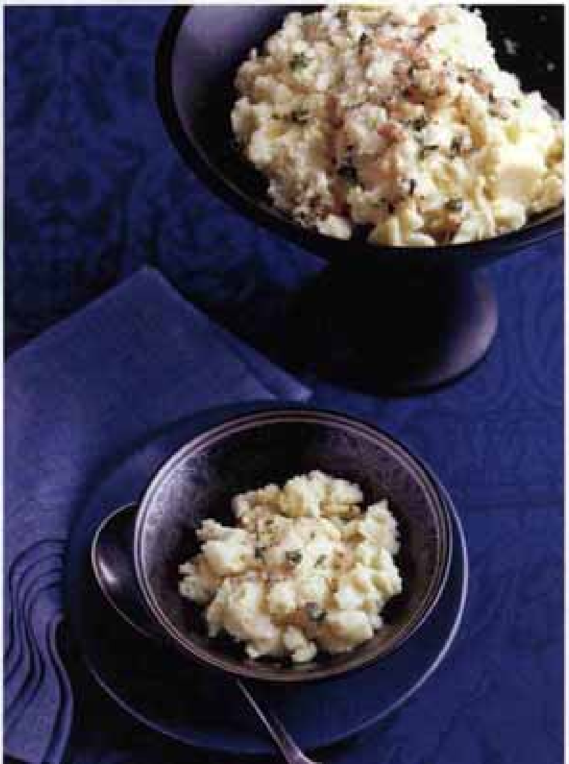
Winter Salad with Roasted Beets and Citrus
(opposite) Ingredients of the season yield a lovely first course.
Recipe on page 138.

Brined Pork Loin with Brown Sugar–Bourbon Glaze (right)

Down-home flavors produce a surprisingly graceful entrée. Recipe on page 140.

Sherried Green Beans and Mushrooms

(below) Add color and crunch to the meal. Recipe on page 142.



Cipollini and Apples with Bacon

(right) A beguiling mix of tastes and textures, this simple side pairs crisp, smoky bacon with spicy, juicy apples and buttery-soft onions that mellow to sweetness when cooked. Recipe on page 140.

Mashed Yukon Gold Potatoes with Horseradish Butter

(left) A fresh take on the side dish standby that is anything but ordinary. Recipe on page 141.

Devote some attention to the style of the dishes, pairing the robust qualities of browned onions and crunchy bacon with the delicate blush of apples and lacy sprigs of thyme.

German Chocolate Mousse (this page) Take the classic dessert from a substantial cake to heavenly, ethereal mousse. Recipe on page 143.

Roasted Pear Crème Brûlée Tart (opposite) Part pie, part crème brûlée, part fruit crisp—all addictively delicious. Recipe on page 142.

Playful reinvention can still be refined and reverent. Start with beloved flavors and honor the essence of what we cherish about them—toasted coconut and pecans, or the crackly crunch of torched sugar.

Our Best Holiday Menu

(Serves 8)

Winter Salad with Roasted Beets and Citrus Reduction Dressing

"My ultimate starter salad would celebrate the produce of the season and make a knockout-gorgeous addition to the table, so I developed this one using fresh orange juice, multicolored beets, and—for good measure—some creamy, tangy goat cheese." —Timothy Q. Cebula, Associate Food Editor

4 medium beets (red and golden)
Cooking spray
3/4 cup fresh orange juice (about 4 oranges)
1/2 teaspoon sugar
1 tablespoon minced shallots
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
4 cups torn Boston lettuce
2 cups trimmed watercress
2 cups torn radicchio
1/2 cup (2 ounces) crumbled goat cheese

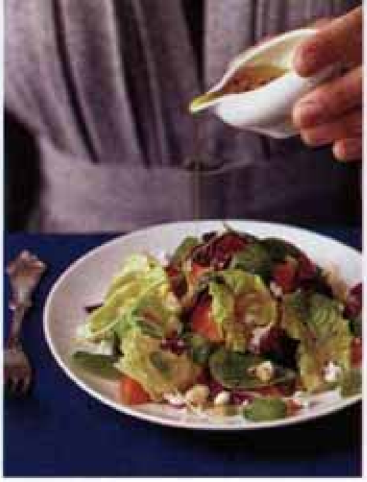
1. Preheat oven to 400°.

2. Leave root and 1-inch stem on beets; scrub with a brush. Place beets on a foil-lined jelly-roll pan coated with cooking spray. Lightly coat beets with cooking spray. Bake at 400° for 1 hour and 10 minutes or until tender. Cool beets slightly. Trim off beet roots and stems; rub off skins. Cut beets into ½-inch-thick wedges.

3. Bring juice and sugar to a boil in a small saucepan; cook 10 minutes or until reduced to 2 tablespoons. Pour into a medium bowl; cool slightly. Add shallots, vinegar, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper, stirring with a whisk. Gradually add oil, stirring constantly with a whisk.

4. Combine lettuce, watercress, and radicchio. Sprinkle lettuce mixture with remaining ¼ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper; toss gently to combine. Arrange about 1 cup lettuce mixture on each of 8 salad plates. Divide beets evenly among salads. Drizzle about 1 tablespoon dressing over each salad; sprinkle each salad with 1 tablespoon cheese. Yield: 8 servings.

CALORIES 127; **FAT** 9.1g (sat 2.4g, mono 5.4g, poly 0.8g); **PROTEIN** 3.1g; **CARB** 8.2g; **FIBER** 1.7g; **CHOL** 6mg; **IRON** 1mg; **SODIUM** 253mg; **CALC** 53mg



WINE NOTE White wine is usually a good bet with salad, but the earthy and robust flavors in Winter Salad with Roasted Beets and Citrus Reduction Dressing allow this hearty course to handle a lighter red wine, such as Irony Monterey Pinot Noir 2006 ($16). The wine's berry fruit goes well with goat cheese, and its earthy mushroom flavors are enhanced by roasted beets, while tart acidity on the finish matches the citrus. —**Jeffery Lindenmuth**

Crab Bisque

"I wanted to create a second course that is indulgent, rich, and pretty, too. Funny: The first time we tried this and pureed the soup in a food processor, we almost decided to start over because the texture wasn't smooth enough. But then we put it in the blender, and it came out perfectly creamy." —Mary Drennen Ankar, Test Kitchen Professional

Cooking spray
1¼ cups thinly sliced shallots (about 4 large)
1 celery stalk, finely chopped (about 1/2 cup)
4 garlic cloves, minced
3 tablespoons vermouth
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/8 teaspoon ground red pepper
1 pound jumbo lump crabmeat, shell pieces removed and divided
3 cups fat-free milk
1 cup clam juice
1.5 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1/3 cup)
1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
1½ teaspoons fresh lemon juice

1. Heat a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add shallots and celery to pan; cook 10 minutes or until softened, stirring occasionally. Add garlic; cook 1 minute. Stir in vermouth; cook 1 minute or until liquid evaporates. Add salt, peppers, and 8 ounces crabmeat.

2. Combine milk and clam juice in a large bowl. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into a dry measuring cup; level with a knife. Whisk flour into milk mixture; add to pan. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Cook 1 minute or until slightly thickened, stirring constantly.

3. Place half of milk mixture in blender. Remove center piece of blender lid (to allow steam to escape); secure blender lid on blender. Place a clean towel over opening in blender lid (to avoid splatters). Blend until smooth. Pour into a large bowl. Repeat procedure with remaining milk mixture. Return pureed mixture to pan. Stir in cream; cook over medium heat 3 minutes or until thoroughly heated.

4. Combine the remaining 8 ounces crabmeat, chives, and lemon juice in a medium bowl. Top soup with the crabmeat mixture. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: ¾ cup soup and about ¼ cup crabmeat mixture).

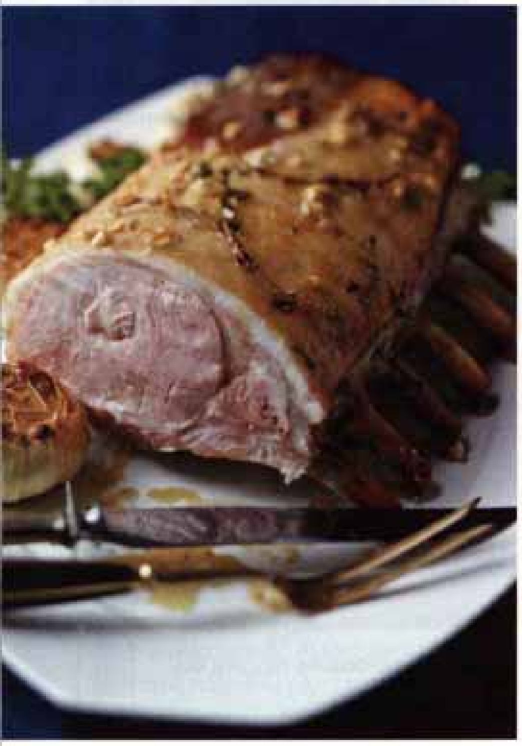
CALORIES 188; **FAT** 6.7g (sat 3.6g, mono 1.8g, poly 0.6g); **PROTEIN** 16.3g; **CARB** 14.1g; **FIBER** 0.5g; **CHOL** 80mg; **IRON** 1.3mg; **SODIUM** 453mg; **CALC** 204mg

WINE NOTE If there's ever a time to pull out a good chardonnay, it's when crab is on the table. The wine's lush apple fruit loves the sweet shellfish, and if you pick a wine with an edge of creamy citrus, it works like a twist of lemon. Napa Valley's 2007 Antica Chardonnay ($35), from Italy's Antinori family, is your bottle for the Crab Bisque, with crisp citrus and bracing herbs balancing its sweet fruit. —**Sara Schneider**

Brined Pork Loin with Brown Sugar–Bourbon Glaze

"Brined pork is about as good as it gets. Throw some bourbon on it, though, and it somehow gets better." —Mike Wilson, former Test Kitchen Professional

1 gallon water
1 cup kosher salt
1 (5-pound) French-cut pork loin rib roast, trimmed (about 8 bones)
1 cup packed brown sugar
½ cup cider vinegar
3 tablespoons bourbon



1 teaspoon black peppercorns
1 bay leaf
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper
6 garlic cloves, minced
6 thyme sprigs

1. Combine 1 gallon water and salt in a large stockpot, stirring until salt dissolves. Add pork to brine; refrigerate for 24 hours.
2. Remove pork from brine; discard brine. Pat pork dry with paper towels.
3. Preheat oven to 375°.
4. Combine sugar, vinegar, bourbon, peppercorns, and bay leaf in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil; cook 9 minutes or until reduced to ⅔ cup. Strain mixture through a sieve over a bowl; discard solids. Set aside.
5. Combine olive oil, ground pepper, and garlic in a small bowl; rub evenly over pork. Top with thyme sprigs. Place pork in a large roasting pan. Bake at 375° for 1 hour and 10 minutes. Brush brown sugar mixture evenly over pork; bake an additional 20 minutes or until thermometer inserted into the thickest portion of pork registers 140° (slightly pink). Place pork on a platter. Cover loosely with foil; let stand 15 minutes before slicing. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1 chop).

CALORIES 357; **FAT** 14.2g (sat 3.5g, mono 8.3g, poly 1.5g); **PROTEIN** 25g; **CARB** 28.4g; **FIBER** 0.3g; **CHOL** 62mg; **IRON** 1.8mg; **SODIUM** 628mg; **CALC** 40mg

WINE NOTE Brined Pork Loin with Brown Sugar-Bourbon Glaze begs for a wine that's not actually sweet, but seems to be because it's so fruity. Juicy red Zinfandel is that kind of wine. Go for Dutton Goldfield's intense 2007 Zin from the Morelli Lane Vineyard in California's chilly Russian River Valley ($40). Planted by Italian settlers more than 100 years ago, these vines give up bright berry and cherry flavors, plus a spiciness that makes the most of the black peppercorns in the glaze (and, in fact, the rest of this tangy, spicy menu). **—Sara Schneider**

Cipollini and Apples with Bacon

"The holidays are the only time I feel it's worth it to fool around with these tiny onions. They become really tender and brown, which pairs well with the slight crunch from the apples. And the browned onions and pink fruit look just lovely together and brighten up the table." —Tiffany Vickers Davis, Assistant Test Kitchen Director

1 tablespoon butter
4 medium Gala apples, cored and cut into (1/4-inch-thick) wedges
2 slices applewood-smoked bacon, chopped
20 ounces small cipollini onions, peeled
1/3 cup fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
1 1/2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Thyme sprigs (optional)

1. Melt butter in a large, heavy skillet over high heat. Add apples to pan; cook 6 minutes or until edges are very brown, stirring frequently. Remove apples from pan; set aside. Reduce heat to medium. Add bacon to pan; cook 3 minutes or until crisp. Remove bacon from pan, reserving drippings; set bacon aside. Add onions to drippings in pan; cover and cook 8 minutes or until golden, stirring occasionally. Stir in chicken broth, vinegar, and thyme leaves; cook 7 minutes. Uncover; return apples to pan. Cook 3 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Stir in bacon, salt, and pepper. Garnish with thyme sprigs, if desired. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about 3/4 cup).

CALORIES 117; **FAT** 4.1g (sat 1.8g, mono 1.5g, poly 0.4g); **PROTEIN** 1.7g; **CARB** 19.7g; **FIBER** 1.7g; **CHOL** 8mg; **IRON** 0.4mg; **SODIUM** 237mg; **CALC** 23mg

Mashed Yukon Gold Potatoes with Horseradish Butter

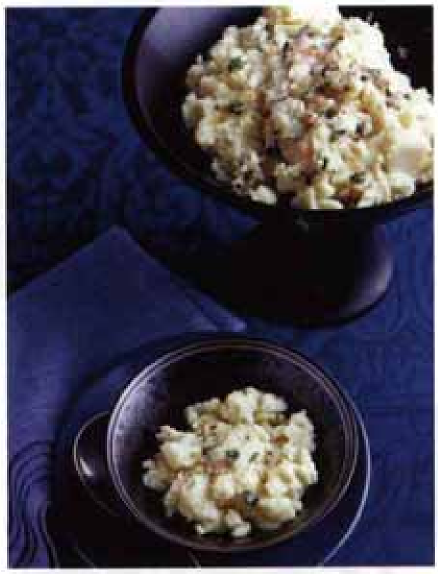
"I wanted to contribute some big flavors to the menu. Horseradish is such a pungent ingredient that a little goes a long way, and the bay leaf infuses the potatoes with no added sodium."
—Kellie Gerber Kelley, Senior Food Stylist

Horseradish butter:
Cooking spray
1 tablespoon minced shallots
1/4 cup butter, softened
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
2 teaspoons prepared horseradish

Potatoes:
6 1/2 cups cubed peeled Yukon gold potatoes (about 2 1/2 pounds)
1 bay leaf
1/4 cup 1% low-fat milk
1/4 cup fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
1/4 cup reduced-fat sour cream
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. To prepare horseradish butter, heat a small nonstick skillet over medium heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add shallots to pan; cook 1 minute. Remove from heat; cool.
2. Combine shallots, butter, parsley, and horseradish in a small bowl; blend well. Transfer butter mixture to a sheet of plastic wrap. Shape butter mixture into a 3-inch-long log, using plastic wrap to help mold. Wrap log tightly in plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm.
3. To prepare potatoes, place potatoes and bay leaf in a large saucepan; cover with water. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 20 minutes or until tender; drain. Discard bay leaf. Press potatoes through a ricer or food mill into a large bowl. Combine milk and broth in a microwave-safe dish. Microwave at HIGH 1 minute or until warm. Add milk mixture, sour cream, salt, and pepper to potatoes, stirring until well blended. Serve with horseradish butter. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1/2 cup potatoes and 1 1/2 teaspoons horseradish butter).

CALORIES 182; **FAT** 6.7g (sat 4.2g, mono 1.8g, poly 0.3g); **PROTEIN** 4g; **CARB** 26.1g; **FIBER** 1.8g; **CHOL** 18mg; **IRON** 1.3mg; **SODIUM** 369mg; **CALC** 21mg



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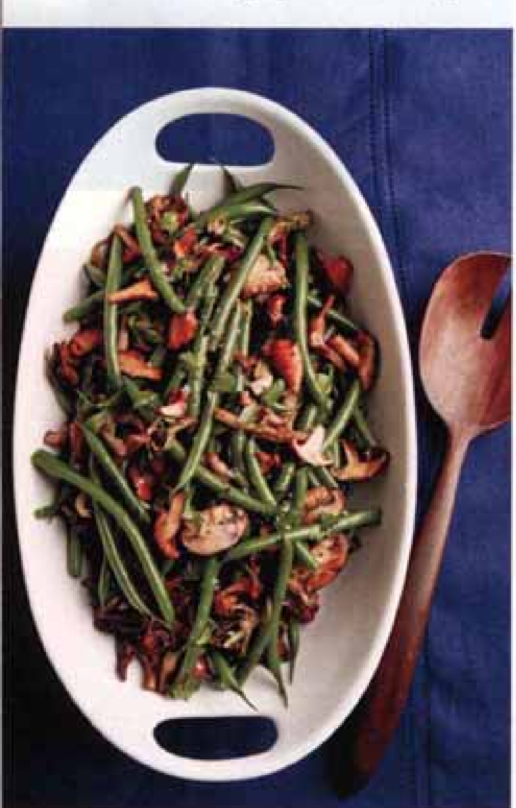
Sherried Green Beans and Mushrooms

"Everybody expects to see green beans at the holiday table, but I wanted to add some unexpected flourishes." —Julianna Grimes, Associate Food Editor

1½ pounds haricots verts, trimmed
3 tablespoons butter, divided
⅓ cup thinly sliced shallots
¾ pound exotic mushroom blend, coarsely chopped
¼ cup dry sherry
3 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
¾ teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Steam haricots verts 5 minutes or until crisp-tender; remove from heat.
2. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add shallots to pan; sauté 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add mushrooms; sauté 5 minutes or until liquid evaporates. Stir in sherry; bring to a boil. Cook until liquid almost evaporates (about 2 minutes). Add remaining 1 tablespoon butter and haricots verts; cook 30 seconds or until thoroughly heated, tossing to coat. Remove from heat. Add parsley, thyme, salt, and pepper; toss to combine. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about 1 cup).



CALORIES 80; **FAT** 4.3g (sat 2.7g, mono 1.1g, poly 0.2g); **PROTEIN** 2.4g; **CARB** 8.3g; **FIBER** 3.5g; **CHOL** 11mg; **IRON** 0.8mg; **SODIUM** 256mg; **CALC** 56mg

Roasted Pear Crème Brûlée Tart

"Since most people make an effort to save room for dessert, I came up with something special. This tart combines elements of every good dessert—flaky crust, crunchy caramelized sugar, creamy custard, and soft roasted fruit. You can make all the components ahead of time, but brûlée the pears just before serving." —SaBrina Bone, Test Kitchen Professional

Pastry:
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
4 ounces all-purpose flour (about ¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons)
¼ cup chilled butter, cut into small pieces
2 tablespoons ice water
Cooking spray

Pastry cream:
¼ cup packed brown sugar
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
⅛ teaspoon salt
2 cups 2% reduced-fat milk
1 (4-inch) piece vanilla bean, split lengthwise
1 large egg, lightly beaten

Topping:
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 medium pears, peeled, cored, and halved
⅓ cup granulated sugar

1. Preheat oven to 450°.
2. To prepare pastry, place first 3 ingredients in a food processor; pulse to combine. Add butter; pulse 10 times or until mixture resembles coarse meal. With processor on, slowly add 2 tablespoons ice water through food chute, processing just until dough starts to come together. Turn dough out onto a piece of plastic wrap; press into a disk. Cover and chill 10 minutes in the freezer. Place dough between 2 sheets of plastic wrap; roll dough into a 10-inch circle. Fit dough into a 9-inch round removable-bottom tart pan coated with cooking spray; pierce dough with a fork. Bake at 450° for 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool completely on a wire rack.
3. To prepare pastry cream, combine brown sugar, 3 tablespoons flour, and ⅛ teaspoon salt in a medium, heavy saucepan. Gradually add milk, stirring with a whisk. Scrape seeds from vanilla bean; add seeds and bean to milk mixture. Cook over medium-high heat until thick and bubbly (about 5 minutes), stirring constantly. Place egg in a large bowl. Gradually stir hot milk mixture into egg. Return milk mixture to pan; cook 2 minutes or until mixture reaches 185° and coats the back of a spoon, stirring constantly. Discard vanilla bean. Spread pastry cream onto a baking sheet; cover entire surface with plastic wrap. Refrigerate 20 minutes or until chilled. Spread pastry cream evenly into tart shell; cover and chill at least 2 hours or until set.
4. To prepare topping, combine juice, cinnamon, nutmeg, and pears; toss well to coat. Place pears, cut side down, in an 11 x 7–inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Bake at 450° for 45 minutes or until tender. Cool completely; thinly slice. Place on paper towels; pat dry with additional paper towels.

Arrange the pear slices spoke-like over pastry cream. Cover and chill at least 30 minutes.

6. Sprinkle ⅓ cup granulated sugar evenly over pears, leaving a ½-inch border. Holding a kitchen blowtorch about 2 inches from the top of custard, heat the sugar, moving the torch back and forth, until the sugar is melted and caramelized (about 3 minutes). Serve immediately. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1 wedge).

CALORIES 241; **FAT** 7.6g (sat 4.5g, mono 2.1g, poly 0.4g); **PROTEIN** 4.8g; **CARB** 39.3g; **FIBER** 1.8g; **CHOL** 42mg; **IRON** 1.2mg; **SODIUM** 194mg; **CALC** 92mg

German Chocolate Mousse

"I felt compelled to make a chocolate dessert option, too. It's a twist on a family favorite, like having German chocolate cake, but in a more decadent, satisfying, and rich form. Reserve some whole pecan halves for a pretty garnish."
–SaBrina Bone, Test Kitchen Professional

- **1⅓ cups 1% low-fat milk**
- **2 teaspoons unflavored gelatin**
- **1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **8 ounces dark chocolate chips**
- **4 cups frozen light whipped topping, thawed**
- **¼ cup flaked sweetened coconut, toasted**
- **¼ cup chopped pecans, toasted**

1. Combine first 3 ingredients in a heavy saucepan; let stand 2 minutes. Cook over medium-high heat to 180° or until tiny bubbles form around edge (do not boil). Remove from heat, and add chocolate; cover and let stand 5 minutes. Stir until chocolate melts.

2. Pour chocolate mixture into a medium bowl; cover and chill 30 minutes or until set. Gently fold in whipped topping. Spoon about ⅔ cup mousse into each of 8 dessert bowls. Cover and chill 2 hours or until set. Top each serving with 1½ teaspoons coconut and 1½ teaspoons pecans. Yield: 8 servings.

CALORIES 269; **FAT** 16.3g (sat 10.8g, mono 4.3g, poly 1.1g); **PROTEIN** 3.2g; **CARB** 32.7g; **FIBER** 2.5g; **CHOL** 2mg; **IRON** 1.5mg; **SODIUM** 38mg; **CALC** 53mg

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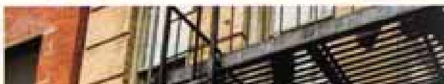

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FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY BY RANDY MAYOR

STYLING BY LEIGH ANN ROSS

FOOD STYLING BY CHARLOTTE FEKETE

FOOD AND THE CITY:

a holiday love story

Come Christmastime, much is cooking in America's greatest melting-pot city. Molly O'Neill shares some of her holiday traditions and recipes.

The city that never sleeps is always eating, especially in December. Opposite, clockwise from top left: Pastries at Eli's Manhattan; skaters at Rockefeller Center; lower east side institution Russ & Daughters and its cured fish. Above, left to right: Cookbook author O'Neill browses for chocolate treats at Jacques Torres; sweet confections at Eli's.

Unlike many cities, New York does not have a locally-born-and-raised requirement. You can be born in Columbus, Ohio, as I was, but if you love New York City, and you know New York City, and you survive New York City, you're a real New Yorker. We're all fueled by the pace and vigor, drive and hope. We thrive on its offerings in the arts, letters, theater, music, and sports. We relish nothing more than the discovery of a fabulous street vendor or teeny no-name eatery, except perhaps a meal in one of the world-famous restaurants.

In my experience, though, it takes about 10 winter holidays to become that real New Yorker. It takes that long to absorb city instinct, gather memories, and establish seasonal traditions. You also learn to deal with conflicting desires. Most New Yorkers want the magnificence of winter holidays in the city. Most also fantasize about a cozy, hearth-and-home sort of Christmas. I still do.

Even my food cravings clash at times. But after 30 years, I've learned to approach them in the spirit of Alternate Side of the Street Parking: Some days you park on the north side; other days, to accommodate the street cleaner, you move your car to the south side. And so when I yearn for glamorous food, I cruise for caviar and smoked Scottish salmon midtown at the Petrossian Boutique, a silent, polished marble citadel where fish eggs are displayed behind gleaming glass like rare, Byzantine mosaics. Other days, when I'm feeling

"My craving begins the day after Thanksgiving, when the traffic becomes unbearable and the *push-cart vendors* start stoking their chestnut roasters."

more down-to-earth, I become one with the seething, close-packed, wet-wool-coated sea of humanity in Russ & Daughters' storefront on the lower east side and wait my turn for lumpfish and lox.

Both forays have become rituals in my personal 12 days of Christmas in New York City. My craving begins the day after Thanksgiving, when the traffic becomes unbearable and the push-cart vendors start stoking their chestnut roasters. There will be caviar. I can delay gratification, but resisting is as useless as trying not to walk to Rockefeller Center to gape at the 70-foot tree.

In my early years in New York, I served the fish roe as I'd been served it while at cooking school in Paris: on buckwheat blini, with crème fraîche, minced red onion, hard-cooked egg, and melted butter on the side. But the city and a marriage tutored me in interdenominational caviar service. Somewhere along the way, latkes became essential to my caviar custom, which kicks off a season of wanton consumption.

I prepare my once-a-year cassoulet for 50 on Christmas Eve, but on the days leading up to the event, meals vary: some rich food, some light; some I purchase, some I cook. I usually make duck and goose confit for the cassoulet the day after caviar. Oysters are the logical counterpoint to poultry braised in its own fat, and so my bivalve mania strikes next. The seeds for this bender were sown during my apprenticeship years in Paris, where a pilgrimage to the classic brasserie Charlot-Le Roi des Coquillages for a tower of shellfish was de rigueur. I changed the destination—now I hit The Oyster Bar at Grand Central Station—but a long, gossipy, slow-slurping lunch with an old friend remains a constant port in the holiday storm. The diversity of oysters—this variety briny, this one coppery, this one flabby, this one sweet—seems to direct the confidences we exchange. Afterward, we walk to the Mediterranean food importers Todaro Bros. in Murray Hill to buy panettone (Italian Christmas bread), jars of Italian chestnuts, citron, and a crate of mandarin oranges.

The holiday season somehow justifies buying gem-quality ingredients. This, in turn, is an excuse to stroll through neighborhoods I might otherwise zoom by and to shop at my leisure. I head uptown to Grace's Marketplace for Christmas cookie ingredients, walk to William Poll for sprinkling sugars, then across to Fifth Avenue to look at the store windows.

Another day, I'll head downtown to Myers of Keswick to buy a can of fine British tea for the high teas I serve on New Year's Day, then continue southeast to Dean & DeLuca for a can of the Marriage Frères Christmas blend tea as well as the Luxardo Apry Extra Apricot Jam. During the holidays, I always make a triple duck consommé and serve it with spaetzle, which means a walk to Schaller & Weber for German sausages, mustard, and dumplings.

And then there are the trips to Eli's Manhattan, the overstuffed hurly-burly of gorgeous prepared food and high-end groceries, supplying everything

Bottom, left to right: ready-to-eat delicacies like caviar and quail eggs await customers at Russ & Daughters; fresh bread at Eli's.

Top, left to right: City sidewalks seen from inside Jacques Torres; seasonal sweets at Todaro Bros.; cured fish at Russ & Daughters.

from fresh-baked breads and pastries to seasonal produce, and charming holiday confections as quaint and classic as gingerbread houses.

Each outing offers unexpected treats that remind me why I love New York: the man making sugar-spiced pecans on the street in midtown; the truck hawking hot gingerbread in Soho; the Chinatown vendor who sells glazed walnuts in a paper cone; and the one who makes eggnog zabaglione near Lincoln Center. New Yorkers welcome such surprises.

We are not ashamed to be hokey, either. On December 19th, my stepdaughter and I meet in the late afternoon for dark, spicy, incomparable hot chocolate at the Jacques Torres chocolate shop, then walk uptown to the winter solstice celebration at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine. After the concert, we take the dimmest avenue we can find and stroll toward a place where bright lights dispel darkness—Tavern on the Green worked nicely when she was very young, though lately we've taken to meandering through Times Square. Year-round, the Great White Way demonstrates man-made mastery over primal darkness, but even more so at Christmas. Supper in the venerable jewel box of the Russian Tea Room seems like the next right thing: borscht and more caviar.

The holidays mandate a few senselessly indulgent meals in renowned restaurants. Every New Yorker has a few that recall a perfect meal and hold the possibility of another. Mine are: Le

A taste of New York

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elizabar.com

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1237 Third Ave.
212-737-0600
gracesmarketplace.com

Jacques Torres Hudson Street
350 Hudson at King St. (1 block south of Houston)
212-414-2462
mrchocolate.com

Myers of Keswick
634 Hudson St.
212-691-4194
myersofkeswick.com

Petrossian Boutique
911 Seventh Ave.
212-245-2217
petrossian.com

Russ & Daughters
179 E. Houston St.
212-475-4880
shop.russanddaughters.com

Schaller & Weber
1654 Second Ave.
(at 86th St.)
212-879-3047
schallerweber.com

Todaro Bros.
555 Second Ave.
877-472-2767
todarobros.com

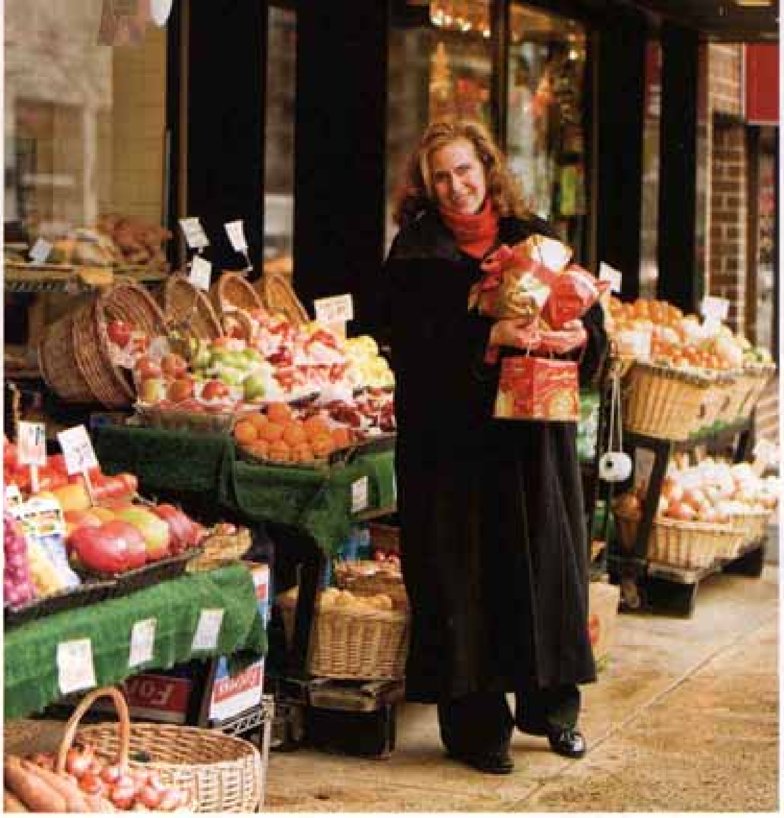
William Poll
1051 Lexington Ave.
212-288-0501
williampoll.com

"In recent years...I've packed the car like a sleigh, left the *city at dusk* and headed upstate to my weekend place."

Bernardin and Daniel for exceptional French cooking; Gramercy Tavern for contemporary American cooking; and for state-of-the-art Italian food, Felidia. By December 21st, however, my thoughts turn homeward.

For many years, I spent the day of December 24th in my apartment, building cassoulet in big clay pots. At 4 p.m., I would cover the pots and put them in the 200° oven for 14 hours. Meanwhile, I'd head to Tomasso in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, for their traditional (and extraordinary) seven-course Italian fish menu, commemorating the Feast of the Seven Fishes. But in recent years, due to constitution or the nostalgic pining that seems to increase in midlife, I've packed the car like a sleigh, left the city at dusk, and headed upstate to my weekend place, an 1802 row house. The place fits nicely into my Alternate-Side Parking approach, allowing me to balance the city's seasonal fanfare with homey Christmastime pleasures. There, neighbors, friends, and family join me in a three-day cooking blitz. At 5 p.m., I put out cassoulet, roasted vegetables, huge salads, bread, and wine, and people begin dropping by for dinner before church. After, I set out desserts. By 10 p.m., the surfaces not filled by food and wine are occupied by people in various states of repose.

In the country, as in the city, Christmas is the quietest day of the year. I ski or take a five-mile hike the next day, and swear that nothing but chicken broth will pass my lips for at least a week. Once—we were snowed in—I actually kept that promise.



Molly's recipes

These recipes are ideal for feeding friends and family around the holidays. We've included a lower-fat adaptation of her celebrated cassoulet, as well as crowd-pleasing sides and main dishes that come together in a snap.

Fennel Slaw with Orange Vinaigrette

Use a mandoline to cut the fennel into thin, uniform slices.

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
1 teaspoon grated orange rind
1 1/2 tablespoons fresh orange juice
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
3 medium fennel bulbs with stalks (about 4 pounds)
2 cups orange sections (about 2 large oranges)
1/2 cup coarsely chopped pitted green olives

1. Combine the first 7 ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Trim tough outer leaves from fennel; mince feathery fronds to measure 1 cup. Remove and discard stalks. Cut fennel bulb in half lengthwise; discard core. Thinly slice bulbs. Add fronds, fennel slices, and orange sections to bowl; toss gently to combine. Sprinkle with olives. Yield: 16 servings (serving size: 3/4 cup).

CALORIES 64; **FAT** 4.4g (sat 0.5g, mono 3.1g, poly 0.7g); **PROTEIN** 0.8g; **CARB** 6.5g; **FIBER** 1.9g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 0.4mg; **SODIUM** 230mg; **CALC** 31mg

Molly's simple, *straightforward seasonings* and cooking methods bring out the best in fresh produce.

Brussels Sprouts with Pancetta

You can substitute bacon for pancetta.

2½ pounds Brussels sprouts, trimmed
1 tablespoon kosher salt
½ cup chopped pancetta (about 4 ounces)
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon cider vinegar

1. Preheat oven to 450°.

2. Cook Brussels sprouts and 1 tablespoon salt in boiling water 6 minutes or until almost tender. Drain and plunge into ice water; drain well.

3. Cook pancetta in a large skillet over medium-low heat until crisp, stirring occasionally. Remove pancetta from pan, reserving drippings.

4. Cut Brussels sprouts in half lengthwise; place on a baking sheet. Add reserved drippings, ¼ teaspoon salt, and pepper; toss to coat. Bake at 450° for 15 minutes or until browned, stirring after 10 minutes. Combine Brussels sprouts, pancetta, and vinegar in a large bowl; toss well. Yield: 10 servings (serving size: about ⅔ cup).

CALORIES 90; **FAT** 4g (sat 1.7g, mono 1.8g, poly 0.6g); **PROTEIN** 5.5g; **CARB** 10.2g; **FIBER** 4.3g; **CHOL** 8mg; **IRON** 1.6mg; **SODIUM** 318mg; **CALC** 48mg

Carrots Roasted with Smoked Paprika

Slicing the carrots lengthwise gives them a distinctive look, while smoky spice balances their natural sweetness.

2 tablespoons olive oil
1½ teaspoons Spanish smoked paprika
1 teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2½ pounds medium carrots, peeled and halved lengthwise
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro

1. Place a jelly-roll pan on bottom oven rack. Preheat oven to 450°.

2. Combine first 5 ingredients in a large bowl; toss well. Arrange carrot mixture in a single layer on preheated pan. Bake at 450° for 25 minutes or until tender, stirring after 12 minutes. Sprinkle with cilantro. Yield: 10 servings (serving size: about ⅓ cup).

CALORIES 72; **FAT** 3g (sat 0.4g, mono 2g, poly 0.4g); **PROTEIN** 1.1g; **CARB** 11.1g; **FIBER** 3.3g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 0.4mg; **SODIUM** 267mg; **CALC** 39mg

Coney Island Skewered Shrimp

Quick and simple crowd-pleasers, these shrimp feature bright Mediterranean flavors.

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon grated lemon rind
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
2 garlic cloves, minced
100 large shrimp, peeled and deveined (about 4 pounds)
Lemon halves (optional)

1. Preheat broiler.
2. Combine first 7 ingredients in a large bowl. Add shrimp to bowl; toss to coat. Thread 5 shrimp onto each of 20 (12-inch) wooden skewers. Arrange 10 skewers on a large baking sheet. Broil 3 minutes on one side; carefully turn and broil 2 minutes or until shrimp are done. Place skewers on a serving platter. Repeat procedure with remaining 10 skewers. Serve with lemon halves, if desired. Yield: 10 servings (serving size: 2 skewers).

CALORIES 218; **FAT** 5.9g (sat 1g, mono 2.4g, poly 1.5g); **PROTEIN** 36.9g; **CARB** 2.1g; **FIBER** 0.1g; **CHOL** 276mg; **IRON** 4.5mg; **SODIUM** 457mg; **CALC** 97mg

Persian Street Vendor Kebabs

These flavorful skewers are reminiscent of food sold from street carts in Manhattan. Sumac is a tart spice commonly used in Middle Eastern dishes; look for it at specialty stores. You can also broil the kebabs for about eight minutes, turning after five minutes.

1 cup grated onion (about 2 medium)
10 tablespoons dry breadcrumbs
1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon paprika
3 garlic cloves, minced
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 1/2 pounds ground turkey breast
1 1/2 pounds ground lamb
1/8 teaspoon saffron threads
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Cooking spray
1/4 teaspoon ground sumac
1/2 cup plain fat-free Greek-style yogurt
2 teaspoons chopped fresh cilantro
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon honey
1/8 teaspoon ground red pepper

1. Place grated onion in a sieve over a large bowl for 30 minutes, pressing occasionally to squeeze out excess liquid. Discard liquid.
2. Prepare grill to medium-high heat.
3. Combine onion, breadcrumbs, and next 8 ingredients (through lamb) in a large bowl; stir until well blended. Divide meat mixture into 40 equal portions, shaping each into a 3 x 1–inch rectangle. Thread 4 pieces onto each of 10 (12-inch) skewers.
4. Heat a small skillet over medium heat. Add saffron to pan; cook for 30 seconds or until fragrant, stirring constantly. Crush saffron in a small bowl; stir in oil.
5. Place kebabs on a grill rack coated with cooking spray; grill 8 minutes or until done, turning after 5 minutes. Place kebabs on a platter. Brush oil mixture evenly over kebabs. Sprinkle kebabs evenly with sumac. Combine yogurt and remaining ingredients in a small bowl; stir until well blended. Serve kebabs with yogurt sauce. Yield: 10 servings (serving size: 1 kebab and about 1 tablespoon sauce).

CALORIES 303; **FAT** 15g (sat 5.2g, mono 6.7g, poly 1.4g); **PROTEIN** 31.9g; **CARB** 9g; **FIBER** 0.8g; **CHOL** 113mg; **IRON** 2.1mg; **SODIUM** 441mg; **CALC** 45mg

Viennese Almond Crescents

Look for almond meal—also known as almond flour—in health-food and specialty stores. Bake the cookies ahead, and freeze up to six months in an airtight container, with wax paper between layers. Thaw and dust the cookies with powdered sugar just before serving.

7.5 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1 2/3 cups)
2/3 cup almond meal
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup butter, softened
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1 cup powdered sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Cover 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine flour, almond meal, and salt in a small bowl; stir well with a whisk. Combine butter and granulated sugar in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at medium speed until light and fluffy (about 4 minutes). Gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture; beat until combined. Chill 10 minutes.
3. Shape dough into 40 (2-inch) logs; bend logs to form crescent shape. Arrange crescents 2 inches apart on prepared baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 12 minutes or until edges are slightly golden. Remove from baking sheets; cool on a wire rack. Sprinkle cookies evenly with powdered sugar. Yield: 40 cookies (serving size: 1 cookie).

CALORIES 113; **FAT** 5.5g (sat 3g, mono 1.7g, poly 0.4g); **PROTEIN** 1.7g; **CARB** 14.5g; **FIBER** 0.5g; **CHOL** 12mg; **IRON** 0.7mg; **SODIUM** 44mg; **CALC** 7mg

Duck and Sausage Cassoulet

Molly O'Neill likes to use French-style fresh venison or pork sausages in this dish, though we used lower-fat chicken sausage. The bean mixture bakes twice; start working at least a day ahead. If you don't have a large Dutch oven, you can also prepare this in a 13 x 9-inch baking dish.

1½ pounds dried cannellini beans
1 (1-pound) boneless pork shoulder (Boston butt), trimmed and cut into 1½-inch pieces
½ teaspoon kosher salt, divided
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, divided
1 tablespoon canola oil
2½ cups finely chopped onion (about 2 medium)
1 cup thinly sliced carrot (about ½ pound)
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 (14-ounce) can whole tomatoes, drained and chopped
2 fresh flat-leaf parsley sprigs
1 celery stalk
1 thyme sprig
1 bay leaf
8 cups fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth, divided
2 cups water
5 duck confit legs (about 2½ pounds)
Cooking spray
¾ pound chicken sausage
1 (1-ounce) slice white bread

1. Sort and wash beans; place in a large bowl. Cover with water to 2 inches above beans; cover and let stand 8 hours. Drain beans.

2. Sprinkle pork with ¼ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add pork to pan; cook 6 minutes or until browned, turning occasionally. Remove pork from pan; reduce heat to medium. Add onion and carrot to pan; cook 8 minutes or until lightly browned, stirring occasionally. Add garlic and tomatoes; cook 2 minutes, stirring occasionally. Tie twine around parsley, celery, thyme, and bay leaf to secure. Add pork, beans, 4 cups broth, 2 cups water, and herb bundle to pan. Bring to a simmer; cook, covered, for 2 hours or until beans are tender. Stir in remaining ¼ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon black pepper. Cool bean mixture to room temperature; cover and chill overnight.

3. Preheat oven to 400°.

4. Arrange duck confit legs in a 13 x 9–inch baking dish. Bake at 400° for 15 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Remove skin and meat from bones; shred meat into large pieces. Discard skin and bones.

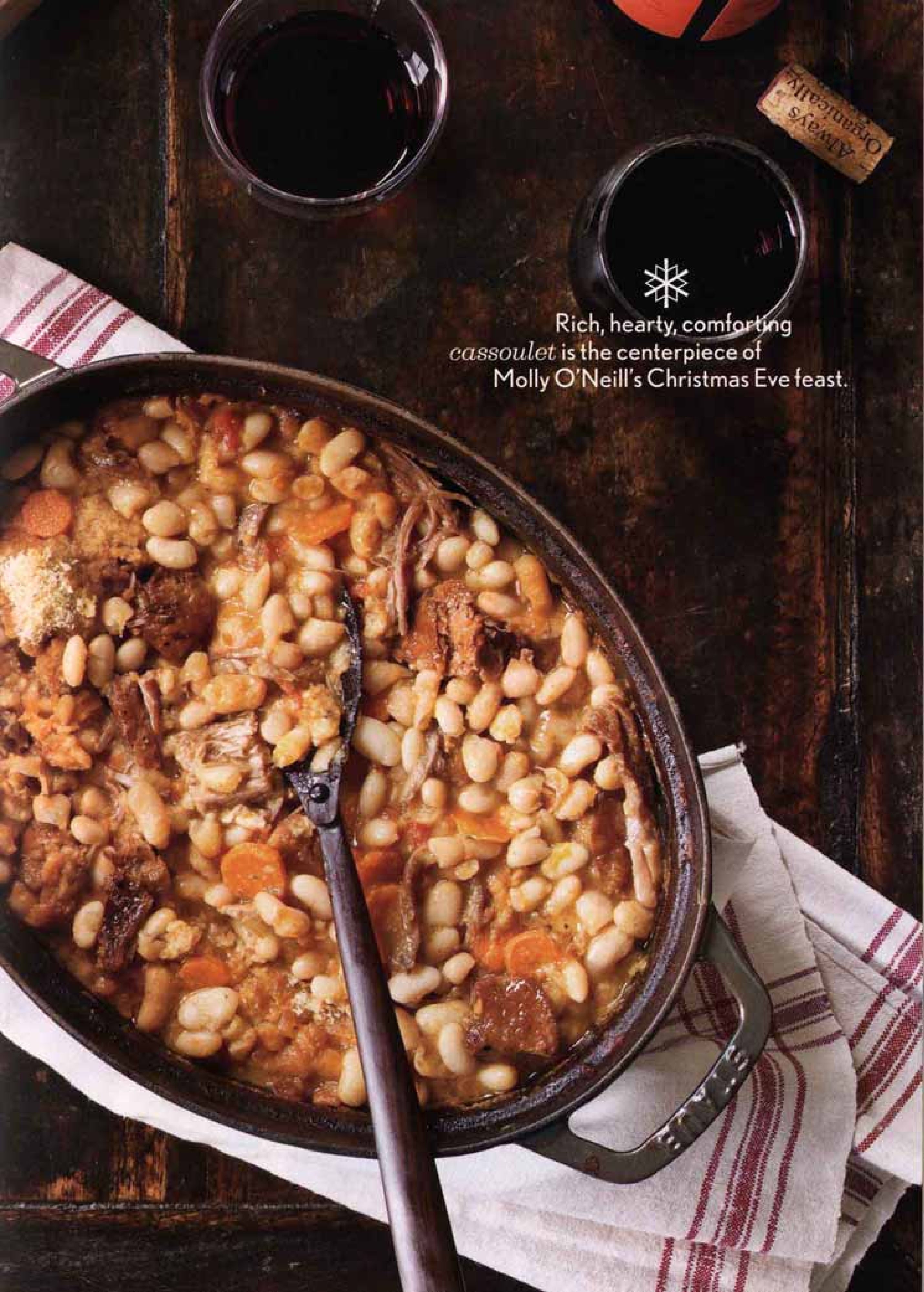
5. Reduce oven temperature to 325°.

6. Bring bean mixture to a simmer over medium-low heat; stir in duck. Bring remaining 4 cups broth to a simmer in a medium saucepan; pour evenly over bean mixture. Bake at 325° for 2 hours. Reduce oven to temperature to 275°.

7. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add sausage to pan; cook 6 minutes or until browned, turning occasionally. Cool slightly; cut into 1-inch pieces. Stir bean mixture; add sausage pieces. Place bread in a food processor; pulse 10 times or until coarse crumbs measure ½ cup. Sprinkle breadcrumbs evenly over cassoulet. Bake at 275° for 1½ hours. Let stand 20 minutes before serving. Yield: 10 servings (serving size: about 1½ cups).

CALORIES 474; **FAT** 11.5g (sat 3.6g, mono 4.6g, poly 2.3g); **PROTEIN** 41.9g; **CARB** 49.9g; **FIBER** 12.9g; **CHOL** 100mg; **IRON** 11.7mg; **SODIUM** 853mg; **CALC** 180mg

Molly O'Neill is a former food columnist for The New York Times *and the award-winning author of* New York Cookbook*, among other publications.*



Rich, hearty, comforting *cassoulet* is the centerpiece of Molly O'Neill's Christmas Eve feast.

A FEW OF OUR **FAVORITE** KITCHEN THINGS

Colander

Dutch oven

Chef's knife

Roasting pan

Sauté pan

Whether it's an inexpensive, truly handy kitchen gadget (say, one of those Microplane graters) or a gorgeous, heirloom-sturdy Dutch oven, the cook's tool is a delicious thing to give or receive. Let the carpenter have his Swedish mortising chisel, the mechanic her drop-forged wrench: Give us the perfectly balanced chef's knife, so finely crafted and sharp that it will cut a tomato with Ginsu ease but do so for decades. Give us the thick-bottomed sauté pan so important to getting a super-crisp skin on a sweet, fresh piece of fish. Give us a heavy roasting pan to caramelize our carrots, a whisk to breathe air into egg whites, a beautifully made colander to drain our greens.

As cooks we should bless our work with beautiful things.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Plamen Petkov*
STYLING BY *Lynsey Fryers*
FOOD STYLING BY *Stephana Bottom*

MIX IT UP WITH A SPLASH OF **COLOR**

We like the new design emphasis on functionality and color. Take a sturdy stainless steel bowl, coat the exterior with a bright hue, add a no-skid grip to the bottom: A fresh take on the basic bowl. Melamine bowls boast pour spouts and cool, modern design. Graduated lids and volume measure markings are on the inside.

Prices and sources on the Wish List, page 170

OUTFIT YOUR KITCHEN WITH A DURABLE DUTCH OVEN

Although you won't use this pot every day (it will gather dust during the hottest summer months), there's nothing better for turning out a soul-warming braised dish or stew. Look for enameled cast iron—because it conducts heat evenly—with a tight-fitting lid. They're available in a wide array of colors, sizes, and price points. A 6-quart pot is the ideal size, and if you choose the oval shape, you can even cook a whole chicken in it. Because these pots are suited for stovetop as well as oven, they can stand in for a stockpot at a shrimp or lobster boil.

Prices and sources on the Wish List, page 170

STUFF
STOCKINGS
WITH GIFTS
THAT WILL
**MAKE ANY
COOK SMILE**

Among the most indispensable tools in any well-appointed kitchen are turning and flexible spatulas, whisks, and sturdy kitchen shears and tongs. Shiny metal with a splash of color provided by heat-resistant silicone gives these basics a functional but modern edge.

FILL YOUR KITCHEN WITH A **PRECIOUS METAL:** COPPER

When we talk about beautiful tools, we're thinking about Mauviel copper cookware. Many of the world's top chefs use this line in their restaurant kitchens. The heavy-gauge copper conducts heat superbly, and these beautiful, classic pans deserve to be displayed in your kitchen for all to admire.

Prices and sources on the Wish List, page 170

GET STARTED WITH **10 PIECES** OF STAINLESS STEEL

A growing number of well-made stainless steel cookware sets are available at bargain prices. We like the look, feel, and price tag of this Cuisinart set, perfect for a young cook starting out, or to replace a hodgepodge of old pots.

SPLASH THOSE **GORGEOUS FRUITS** AND VEGGIES

Every kitchen needs a good stainless colander, and if yours is small or beat up, upgrade! Then supplement with brightly colored melamine or silicone collapsible colanders that are useful and easy to store.

Prices and sources on the Wish List, page 170

CHOOSE A NONSTICK PAN IN GREEN, ORANGE, OR YELLOW

Ecofriendly materials, like bamboo handles, and vibrant outer hues are two of the innovations in the world of nonstick—and we think every cook needs one of these for recipes that don't use much cooking oil.

TRY **COLOR-CODED** CUTTING BOARDS

We love a good, heavy wood cutting board as much as the next cook, but for special tasks—fruit, fish, garlic—consider a few color-coded plastic boards as well, one board for each task to prevent cross-contamination or flavor migration. Look for boards with no-slip surfaces on the bottoms.

Prices and sources on the Wish List, page 170

GET A **SHARPER** EDGE

A great knife is the cook's most important tool. Pricey, yes, but just use one—beautifully balanced and proportioned for the task at hand. Used correctly it will last decades. The market is booming, with knives running the gamut from handmade craftsmanship to lightweight, brightly colored high-tech ceramics (the latter are not to every cook's taste—see if you can handle and even cut with one before you buy).

SAVE SPACE WITH A MORE **VERSATILE, COMPACT** FOOD PROCESSOR

If storage is a concern and you like to keep gadgets to a minimum, you'll love this Cuisinart Elite collection—the graduated bowls make it like three processors in one.

Prices and sources on the Wish List, page 170

GO FROM **OVEN TO TABLE** WITH BEAUTIFUL BAKING DISHES

Baking dishes have come a long way from the classic glass dish of yore. Today you can choose from loads of ceramic, pottery, or heavy cast-iron options that look beautiful on your table. Although a 13 x 9-inch (3-quart) dish is essential, different sizes, shapes, and styles will add life to your table and ease to your cleanup.

A Cook's Holiday Tools Wish List

If your Santa is the sort who needs (and probably appreciates) detailed hints, just check off the tool you want and discreetly (*ahem*) put the list in a place where it won't be missed.

Mixing bowls:

- ☐ (1) Tovolo Melamine Mixing Bowls with Lids, set of 3; target.com ($35)
- ☐ (2) Zak Designs Gemini Large 5-Quart Bowl, red; amazon.com ($32)
- ☐ (3) Architec Prep Mixing Bowl, set of 3, blue; walmart.com ($25)

Dutch oven:

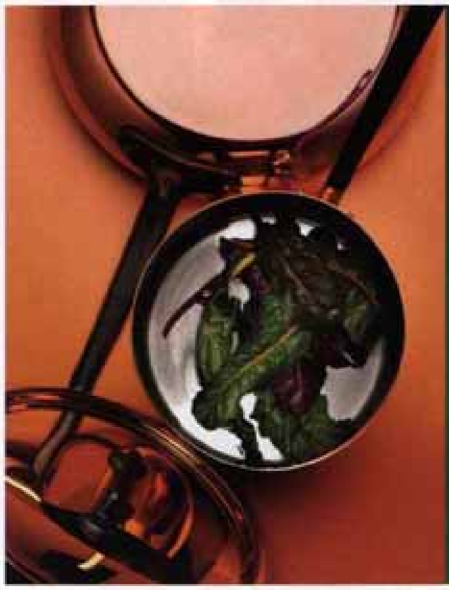
- ☐ Oven to Table Covered Dutch Oven by Denmark, 6-Quart; ttustore.com ($50)

Utensils:

- ☐ (1) Kuhn Rikon 11-inch Flexi Spatula; amazon.com ($16)
- ☐ (2) Grill Friends Stop-and-Go Tongs, set of 2; bbqproshop.com ($20)
- ☐ (3) Rösle Stainless Steel Turner for Non-stick Pans; cookware.com ($38)
- ☐ (4) Trudeau Silicone Whisk, red; www.irawoods.com ($15)
- ☐ (5) Zyliss Gourmet Shears; amazon.com ($20)
- ☐ (6) Tovolo Silicone and Stainless Steel Spatula; centralchef.com ($10)

Copper pans:

- ☐ Mauviel Professional 2.5mm 11¾-inch Copper Fry Pan; chefsresource.com ($360)
- ☐ Mauviel 3.6-quart Copper Sauce Pan with Lid; chefsresource.com ($395)



Stainless set:

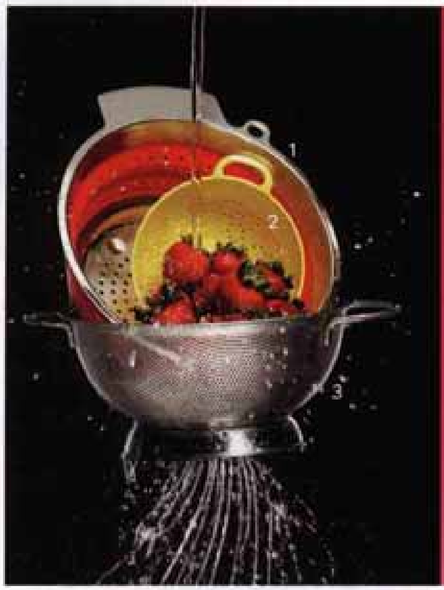
- ☐ Cuisinart Chef's Classic Stainless Steel 10-piece set; amazon.com ($115)

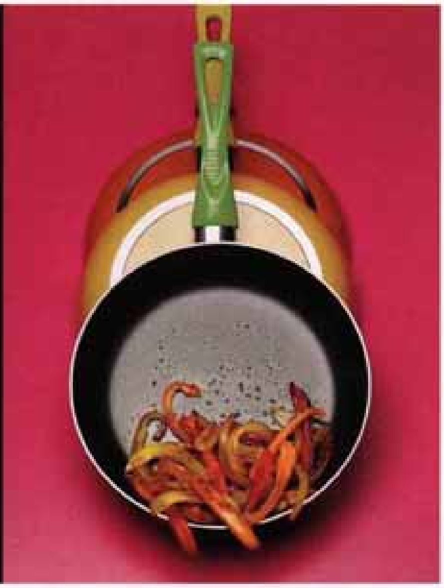
Colanders:

☐ (1) Rösle Collapsible Colander, red; surlatable.com ($40)

☐ (2) Mini Colander, yellow; surlatable.com ($8)

☐ (3) Tovolo Stainless Steel Perforated Colander, large; target.com ($20)





Nonstick pans:

☐ Bialetti Urban Trend 10¼-inch Nonstick Frying Pan; chefini.com ($19)

Cutting boards:

☐ (1) Joseph Joseph 5-Piece Index Cutting Board Set; macys.com ($65)

☐ (2) Gripper Cutting Board; chefs catalog.com ($17)

Knives:

☐ (1) Shun Bob Kramer Chef's Knives, 8-inch; surlatable.com ($340)

☐ (2) Ceramic Paring Knife by Kyocera, 3-inch, yellow; cooking .com ($30)

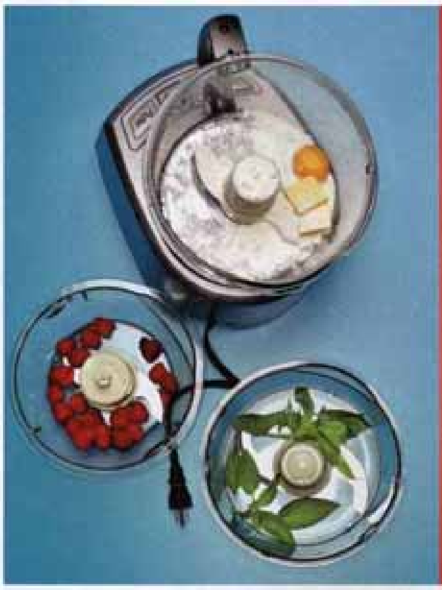
☐ (3) Global Anniversary Utility Knife, 4½-inch; metro kitchen.com ($50)

☐ (4) Pure Komachi 2 Knives, 8-inch Cook's/ Chef's Knife; broad waypanhandler.com ($15)

☐ (5) Henckels Twin Select 8-inch Bread Knife; cooking.com ($80)

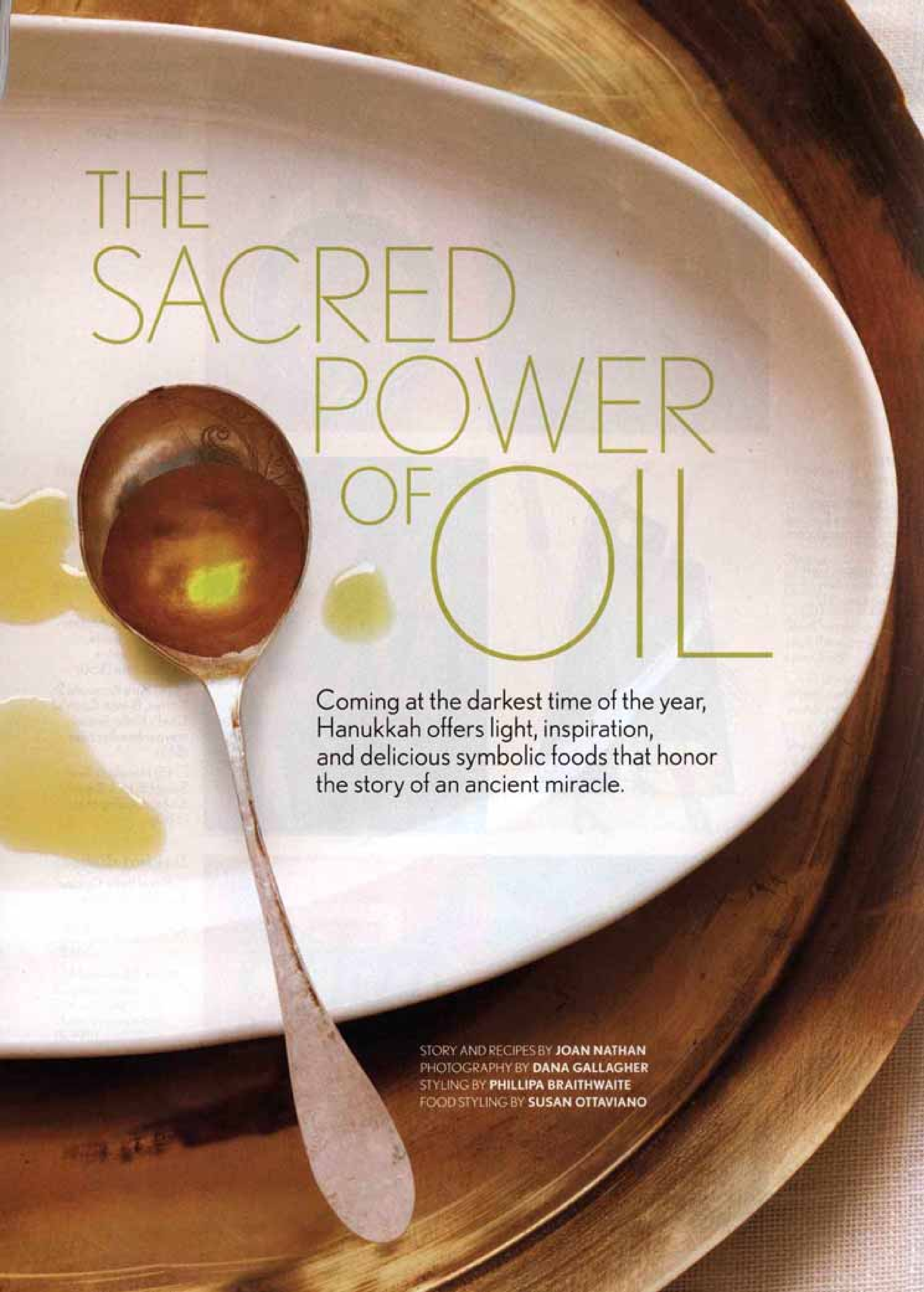
Food processor:

☐ Cuisinart Elite 14-Cup Food Processor; crateandbarrel.com ($299)



Baking dishes:

☐ Revol Belle Cuisine Rectangular Baker, 2¾-quart; surlatable.com ($70)



THE SACRED POWER OF OIL

Coming at the darkest time of the year, Hanukkah offers light, inspiration, and delicious symbolic foods that honor the story of an ancient miracle.

STORY AND RECIPES BY **JOAN NATHAN**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DANA GALLAGHER**
STYLING BY **PHILLIPA BRAITHWAITE**
FOOD STYLING BY **SUSAN OTTAVIANO**

OIL OFFERINGS

(Top) Fennel, Blood Orange, and Watercress Salad, page 180; (left) Greek Cod Cakes, page 183; (right) Loukoumades with Honey-Orange Sauce, page 185.

FENNEL, BLOOD ORANGE, AND WATERCRESS SALAD

Fruity olive oil and tangy lemon juice coat a salad showcasing jewel-like fruits. Recipe on page 180.

After sundown on December 11, Jews throughout the world will light a candle to commemorate an ancient miracle, adding one flame for each of seven more nights until a fully lit menorah is aglow on the last. As the candles flicker, we are reminded of the story of a handful of Jews, led by Judah Maccabee and his brothers, who overpowered the much larger tyrannical Assyrian army in Modi'in, a valley close to Jerusalem, in 164 B.C.E. Upon purifying and rededicating the Temple, only a single day's portion of pure, undefiled oil could be found. But that tiny bit miraculously burned and shone light for a full eight days. Hanukkah is the annual celebration of this triumph—and of the power of oil itself. To this day, traditional Jews light Hanukkah menorahs with olive oil instead of candles.

But olive oil was more than just a provider and symbol of light. It was so important in the ancient world that priests brought the first crush of the purest and finest oil in sealed cruses as offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem. It was also used as protection from the sun, for fuel, for medicine, to anoint kings, for ablutions on priests before entering the Tabernacle in Jerusalem, and, of course, for cooking.

In honor of the miracle of the oil, symbolic Hanukkah foods are cooked in or prepared with oil. Olive oil was traditional, but canola or other vegetable oils are used today, too. In the past when oil was scarce (and quite expensive), cooks even used rendered chicken or goose fat called schmaltz to fry potato latkes, perhaps the most popular Hanukkah offering. Here I've included some of my favorite dishes that I prepare during the eight days of Hanukkah, all of which pay homage to a story of victory over darkness, of enduring light beaming out of scarcity.

-Joan Nathan

OIL-CRISPED GARLICKY BREADCRUMBS SETTLE INTO CAULIFLOWER'S CREVICES SO EVERY BITE CONTAINS CRUNCH.

ISRAELI CAULIFLOWER WITH PANKO

An all-purpose side dish that pairs well with most any entrée. Recipe on page 180.

A WARM CITRUS- AND SPICE-INFUSED SYRUP BATHES IRRESISTIBLY TENDER GREEK FRITTERS.

LOUKOUMADES WITH HONEY-ORANGE SAUCE

Our yeast-dough pastries fry up delicate and light.
Recipe on page 185.

GREEK COD CAKES
Herb-flecked croquettes are hearty and satisfying. Recipe on page 183.

KOSHER WINES AND OILS

Quality kosher products hail from points all around the globe, including California and, of course, Israel. And the range of good kosher wines is getting bigger all the time. You can find these products easily through online sources.

wine
BARON HERZOG
2007 Sauvignon Blanc is a snappy varietal from a California kosher winery. Herzogwinecellars.com; ($11)

oil
KVUZAT YAVNE
Extra-Virgin Suri Olive Oil offers fruity aroma and flavor. Imported from Israel. Israelikosher.com; ($10)

wine
HERZOG 2007 LATE
Harvest Riesling makes a natural partner for our Loukoumades. See wine note on page 185.

oil
HALUTZA ORGANIC
Extra-Virgin Olive Oil boasts a grassy fragrance and pleasantly bitter taste. Imported from Israel. Israeliproducts.com; ($10)

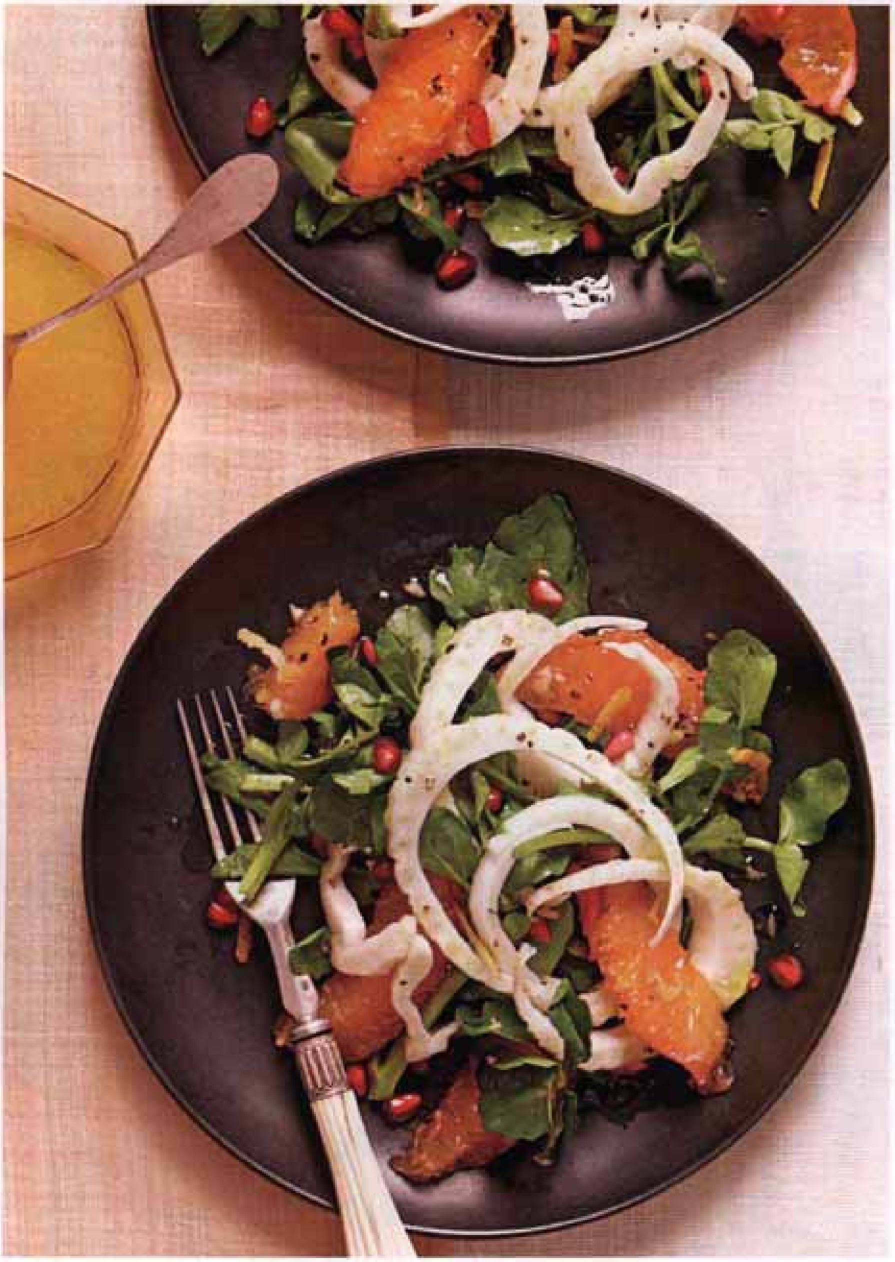
wine
YARDEN 2007 ODEM
Organic Chardonnay comes from Golan Heights winery in Israel. See wine note on page 183.

oil
OXYGEN EXTRA-VIRGIN
Cold Pressed Olive Oil is produced from olives grown on the hills of Galilee. Oxygenimports.com; ($10)

POTATO-APPLE LATKES

Shreds of fruit intertwine with golden potatoes in these hybrid pancakes. Recipe on page 183.

COARSE GRANULES OF SPARKLY TURBINADO SUGAR RAIN DOWN UPON SWEET-SAVORY PAN-FRIED POTATO CAKES.



Israeli Cauliflower with Panko

You can use the garlicky panko mixture to dress up other steamed vegetables, like Brussels sprouts, broccoli, or green beans.

6 cups cauliflower florets
2 tablespoons water
3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1/2 cup panko (Japanese breadcrumbs)
1 garlic clove, minced
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Combine cauliflower and 2 tablespoons water in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave at HIGH 6 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain.
2. Heat 1½ tablespoons oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add panko to pan; cook 3 minutes or until toasted, stirring constantly. Remove panko from pan.
3. Heat remaining 1½ tablespoons oil and garlic in pan over medium-high heat. Add cauliflower; sauté 5 minutes or until golden, stirring occasionally. Add panko, parsley, salt, and pepper; toss to combine. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about ⅔ cup).

CALORIES 78; **FAT** 5.3g (sat 0.7g, mono 3.7g, poly 0.6g); **PROTEIN** 2g; **CARB** 6.7g; **FIBER** 2g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 0.4mg; **SODIUM** 181mg; **CALC** 18mg

Fennel, Blood Orange, and Watercress Salad

3 cups thinly sliced fennel bulb (about 1 large bulb)
3 cups trimmed watercress
1 1/2 cups blood orange sections (about 6 oranges)
3/4 cup pomegranate seeds
3/4 teaspoon grated lemon rind
2 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 garlic clove, minced
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1. Combine first 4 ingredients in a large bowl. Combine lemon rind and next 4 ingredients (through garlic), stirring with a whisk. Drizzle dressing over salad; toss gently to coat. Sprinkle with pepper. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about ¾ cup).

CALORIES 116; **FAT** 4.4g (sat 0.6g, mono 3.1g, poly 0.5g); **PROTEIN** 1.7g; **CARB** 18.4g; **FIBER** 3.5g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 0.4mg; **SODIUM** 170mg; **CALC** 78mg

Potato-Apple Latkes

These sweet-savory pancakes get irresistibly crisp from pan-frying. Keep cooked latkes warm in a 200° oven as you prepare the next batch. Serve with a dollop of fat-free sour cream if you want a tangy adornment.

6 cups shredded peeled Yukon gold potatoes (about 2 pounds)
2 cups shredded Gala or Honeycrisp apples (about 2 medium)
1½ teaspoons salt, divided
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2.25 ounces all-purpose flour (about ½ cup)
6 tablespoons canola oil, divided
1 teaspoon turbinado or granulated sugar

1. Combine potatoes, apples, and 1 teaspoon salt in a colander. Let stand 20 minutes, pressing occasionally with the back of a spoon until barely moist. Combine potato mixture, remaining ½ teaspoon salt, and pepper in a large bowl. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into a dry measuring cup; level with a knife. Add flour to potato mixture; toss well to combine.
2. Heat a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1½ tablespoons oil to pan, swirling to coat. Add potato mixture in ⅓-cupfuls to pan to form 4 latkes; flatten slightly. Cook 6 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Remove latkes from pan; keep warm. Repeat procedure 3 more times with remaining oil and potato mixture. Sprinkle latkes evenly with sugar. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 2 latkes).

CALORIES 235; **FAT** 10.6g (sat 0.8g, mono 6.2g, poly 3.2g); **PROTEIN** 3.6g; **CARB** 31.3g; **FIBER** 2.4g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 1.4mg; **SODIUM** 302mg; **CALC** 4mg

Greek Cod Cakes

For sustainability reasons, be sure to purchase Alaska-caught cod.

Cakes:
4 cups 2% reduced-fat milk
2 pounds cod fillets, cut into 2-inch pieces
1 cup panko (Japanese breadcrumbs), divided
¼ cup minced fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 tablespoons grated onion
2½ teaspoons grated lemon rind
1½ teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
3 large eggs, lightly beaten
2 garlic cloves, minced
¼ cup fresh lemon juice, divided
¼ cup olive oil, divided
Sauce:
½ cup canola mayonnaise
2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 teaspoons chopped fresh dill
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon minced fresh garlic
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Bring milk to a simmer over medium heat in a large, heavy saucepan. Add fish; cover and simmer for 5 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Drain well. Combine fish, ½ cup panko, and next 7 ingredients (through 2 garlic cloves); stir in 2 tablespoons juice. Divide fish mixture into 16 equal portions, shaping each into a ½-inch-thick patty. Dredge patties in remaining ½ cup panko, pressing to coat.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add 4 patties to pan, and cook for 4 minutes on each side or until golden. Remove from pan, and drain on paper towels. Repeat procedure 3 more times with remaining olive oil and patties. Drizzle with remaining 2 tablespoons juice.
3. To prepare sauce, combine canola mayonnaise and remaining ingredients. Serve sauce with cakes. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 2 cakes and about 1 tablespoon sauce).

CALORIES 266; **FAT** 14.4g (sat 1.8g, mono 8.3g, poly 2.8g); **PROTEIN** 24.3g; **CARB** 7.7g; **FIBER** 0.6g; **CHOL** 122mg; **IRON** 1mg; **SODIUM** 679mg; **CALC** 43mg

WINE NOTE Olive oil's prominent role in this fish recipe calls for a white wine that can hold its own. The lemony notes in Yarden 2007 Odem Organic Chardonnay ($17) make for a felicitous pairing, while the wine's buttery richness blends harmoniously with the dish's creamy accompanying sauce. **—Adeena Sussman**

Loukoumades with Honey-Orange Sauce

A 1-tablespoon cookie or ice cream scoop works nicely for spooning out portions of the soft, wet dough. We were happy to learn that if you maintain a constant oil temperature of 375°, the dough absorbs only 1/4 cup; the key is to check the temperature frequently and to avoid overcrowding the pan.

1 tablespoon dry yeast
1 1/4 cups warm water (100° to 110°)
1 tablespoon canola oil
2 teaspoons grated orange rind, divided
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 large egg
13.5 ounces all-purpose flour (about 3 cups)
5 cups canola oil
1 cup fresh orange juice (about 2 oranges)
1 cup honey
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

1. Dissolve yeast in 1 1/4 cups warm water in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add 1 tablespoon oil, 1 teaspoon orange rind, salt, and egg, beating at medium speed with paddle attachment. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. With mixer on low speed, add flour 1 cup at a time, mixing until a spongy, soft dough begins to form (dough will be very soft and wet). Cover bowl with plastic wrap; let rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, 1 hour.

2. Clip a kitchen or candy thermometer to the side of a large, heavy saucepan. Add 5 cups oil to pan; heat oil over medium-high heat until thermometer registers 375°. Reduce heat to medium, checking frequently to maintain oil temperature. Carefully spoon 4 (1-tablespoon) dough portions into hot oil; cook 2 minutes on each side. Remove fried dough with a slotted spoon; drain on paper towels. Repeat procedure with remaining dough.

3. Combine remaining 1 teaspoon rind, orange juice, 1 cup honey, and cinnamon in a medium saucepan over low heat, stirring occasionally until honey dissolves. Keep warm. Serve sauce with loukoumades. Yield: 24 servings (serving size: 2 loukoumades and 1 1/2 tablespoons sauce).

CALORIES 135; **FAT** 3.3g (sat 0.3g, mono 1.8g, poly 1g); **PROTEIN** 2.2g; **CARB** 25g; **FIBER** 0.7g; **CHOL** 9mg; **IRON** 1mg; **SODIUM** 53mg; **CALC** 8mg

WINE NOTE A bold, unctuous dessert wine is the match for these fritters, and this California offering, Herzog 2007 Late Harvest Riesling ($20), fills the bill. Sweet but not cloying, it's got just enough acid to help even out the loukoumades' rich flavors. Its concentrated fruit notes are a great match for the accompanying citrus-tinged honey syrup. **—Adeena Sussman**

Joan Nathan is an award-winning cookbook author whose works include Joan Nathan's Jewish Holiday Cookbook *and* The New American Cooking.

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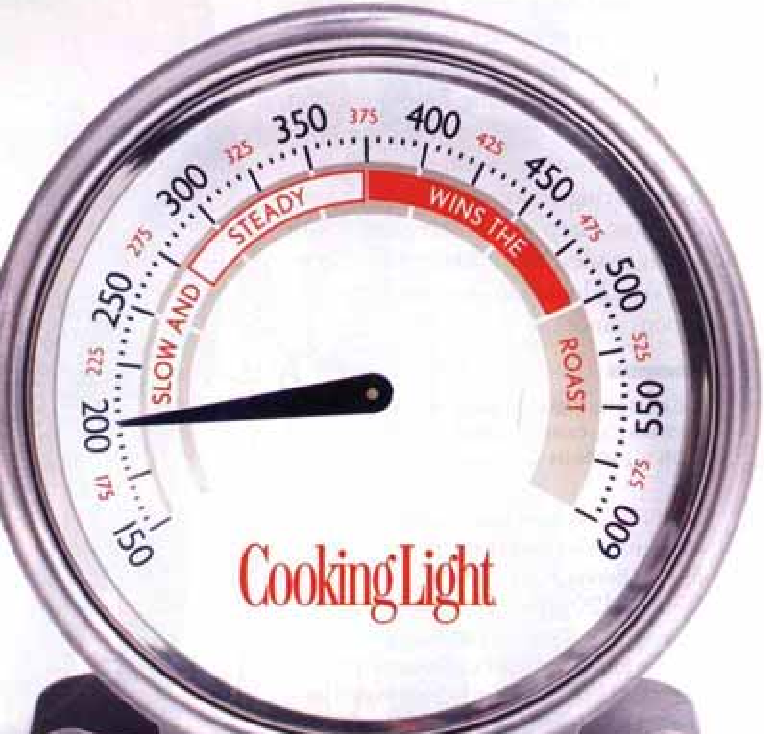
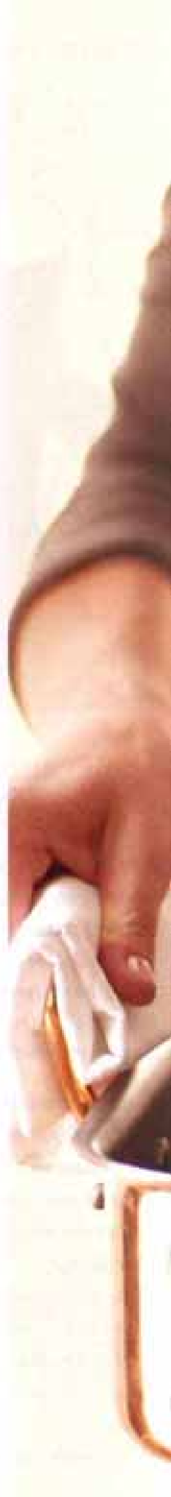
STORY BY **ELISA BOSLEY**
RECIPES BY **DAVID BONOM**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **RANDY MAYOR**
PROP STYLING BY **CINDY BARR**
FOOD STYLING BY **KELLIE GERBER KELLEY** AND **JAMIE KIMM**

Low *and* Slow

Low-temperature roasting brings out the best in foods and yields tender, intensely flavored, evenly cooked meats, fish, and produce.





Garlic and Rosemary Slow-Roasted Turkey,
recipe on page 188

Garlic and Rosemary Slow-Roasted Turkey

A 500° blast aids browning. To ensure food safety, don't stuff the turkey. Also, as with any cooking method, be sure the meat comes to 165°, and serve immediately after it has rested.

1 (12-pound) fresh or frozen turkey, thawed
9 garlic cloves, divided
1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
8 teaspoons butter, softened
1 tablespoon paprika
1½ teaspoons salt
1½ teaspoons pepper
3 sprigs fresh rosemary
Cooking spray

1. Remove and discard giblets and neck from turkey. Trim excess fat. Starting at neck cavity, loosen skin from breast and drumsticks by inserting fingers, gently pushing between skin and meat. Mince 3 garlic cloves; combine minced garlic, chopped rosemary, and next 4 ingredients (through pepper) in a small bowl. Rub butter mixture under loosened skin and rub over breast and drumsticks. Lift wing tips up and over back; tuck under turkey. Place remaining 6 garlic cloves and rosemary sprigs in body cavity. Tie legs together with kitchen string. Let turkey stand 1 hour at room temperature.
2. Preheat oven to 500°.
3. Place turkey, breast side up, on the rack of a roasting pan coated with cooking spray. Place rack in pan. Bake at 500° for 30 minutes. Reduce heat to 250°; bake for 2 hours or until a thermometer inserted into meaty part of thigh registers 165°. Remove from oven; cover loosely with foil. Let stand 20 minutes. Discard skin.

Yield: 12 servings (serving size: about 6 ounces turkey).

CALORIES 366; **FAT** 8.6g (sat 3.6g, mono 1.9g, poly 1.8g); **PROTEIN** 67g; **CARB** 0.7g; **FIBER** 0.3g; **CHOL** 229mg; **IRON** 4.6mg; **SODIUM** 461mg; **CALC** 50mg

Slow roasting completely transforms food. Cook a 5-pound standing rib roast to medium-rare at 400° for about an hour, and you'll have a tasty piece of beef, although slices toward the middle will be much better than others. But cook the same cut at 200° for about 3½ hours, and you'll have an exceptional roast, meltingly tender, juicy as can be, and perfectly medium rare from the first slice to the last.

The science behind the method is straightforward. High heat shrinks meat protein quickly and forces moisture out, like squeezing a sponge—that's why meat cooked at higher temperatures can be brown and dry at the edges before it's done in the center, creating what's known as the "bull's-eye effect." With tougher meat cuts, such as brisket or pork shoulder, slow roasting causes the thicker connective tissue (collagen) to gradually become soft gelatin that coats the proteins, keeping the cooked meat moist and tender. What's more, slow roasting gives muscular fish like halibut and salmon a practically silken texture, and it makes juicy produce like tomatoes and grapes velvety and intensely flavorful.

This technique is a secret weapon for many experienced chefs, but it's not on the radar of most home cooks. That should change: It's simple enough for novices. True, it takes time, but you don't have to slave over the stove. It's also a great technique for entertaining, yielding spectacular results with minimal fuss. Pop a roast into a 200° oven during the day, and by the time guests arrive, dinner is served, and your kitchen isn't overheated. Roasting doesn't need to be a rush. Slow down, savor the aromas wafting from the oven, and consider the process time well spent.

The process transforms

Aromatic Slow-Roasted Tomatoes

Slow roasting is one of the best uses for winter tomatoes because it intensifies their sweetness.

1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon dried basil
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
4 pounds plum tomatoes, halved lengthwise (about 16 medium)
Cooking spray

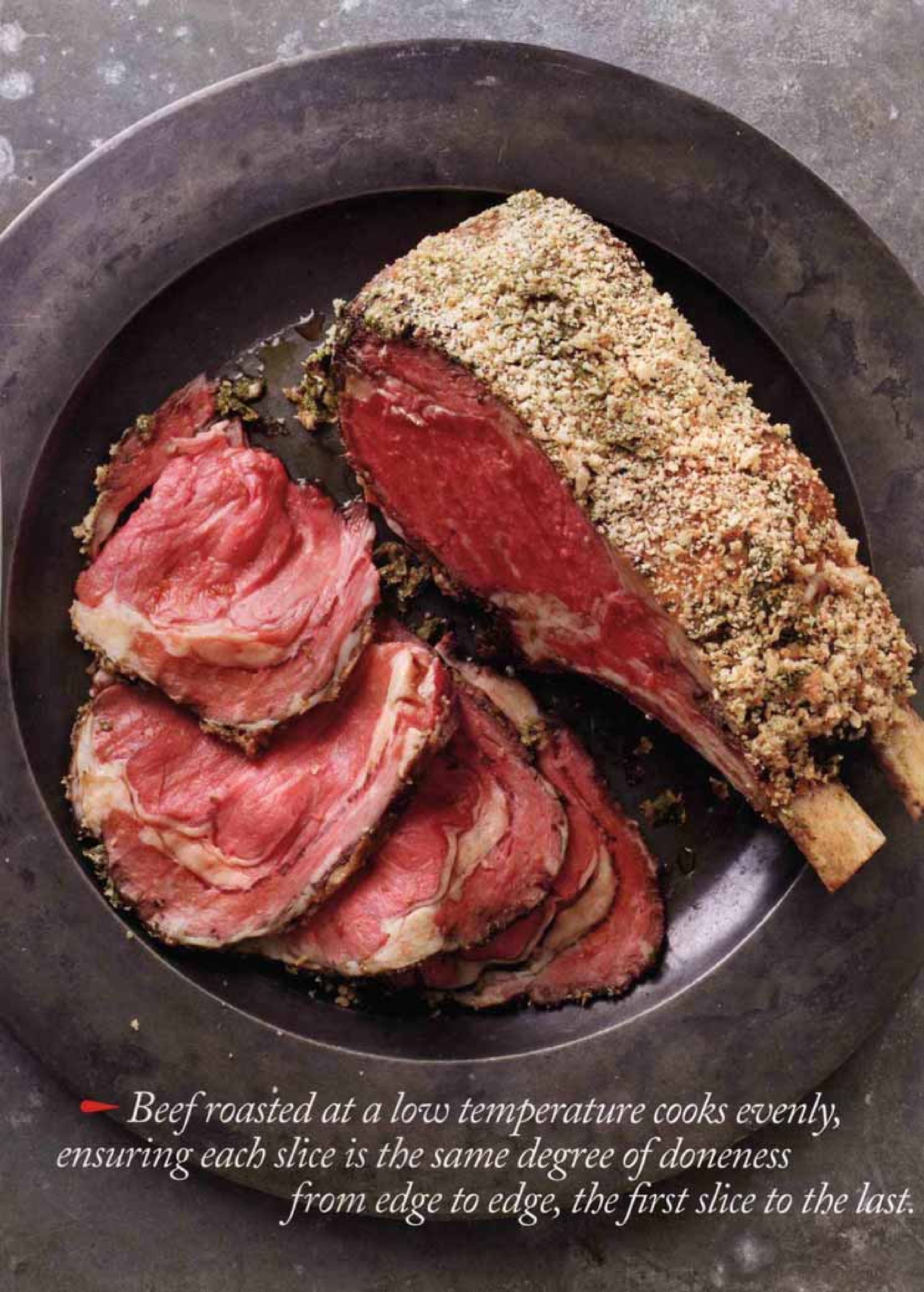
1. Preheat oven to 200°.
2. Combine first 7 ingredients in a large bowl, tossing gently to coat. Arrange tomatoes, cut side up, on a baking sheet coated with cooking spray. Roast at 200° for 7½ hours. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 2 tomato halves).

CALORIES 63; **FAT** 2.2g (sat 0.3g, mono 1.3g, poly 0.4g); **PROTEIN** 2g; **CARB** 10.6g; **FIBER** 2.8g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 0.7mg; **SODIUM** 157mg; **CALC** 26mg

Tomato Sauce:

Process slow-roasted tomatoes until smooth; put through a food mill. Heat 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add 1 large garlic clove, sliced; cook garlic 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Stir in tomato puree. Simmer, stirring occasionally, 1 hour or until sauce yield equals 1¾ cups.

textures and concentrates flavors.



Beef roasted at a low temperature cooks evenly, ensuring each slice is the same degree of doneness from edge to edge, the first slice to the last.

Dijon and Herb–Crusted Standing Beef Rib Roast

2 (1-ounce) slices white bread
1 (5-pound) standing rib roast, trimmed
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon black pepper
Cooking spray
½ cup chopped fresh basil
½ cup chopped fresh parsley
¼ cup Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
3 garlic cloves, minced

1. Place bread slices in a food processor, and pulse 10 times or until fine crumbs measure ¾ cup. Heat a small skillet over medium heat. Add breadcrumbs to pan, and cook 12 minutes or until toasted, stirring frequently. Cool 5 minutes.
2. Let roast stand at room temperature 1 hour. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add roast to pan; cook 5 minutes, browning on all sides. Remove roast from pan. Combine basil and next 4 ingredients (through garlic) in a bowl; spread mustard mixture over roast. Pat breadcrumbs onto roast. Place roast on the rack of a roasting pan coated with cooking spray; place rack in pan.
3. Preheat oven to 200°.
4. Bake roast at 200° for 3½ hours or until a thermometer registers 135° or until desired degree of doneness. Let stand 20 minutes before slicing. Yield: 12 servings (serving size: about 3½ ounces beef).

CALORIES 229; **FAT** 13.9g (sat 5.4g, mono 5.7g, poly 0.6g); **PROTEIN** 22.2g; **CARB** 2.3g; **FIBER** 0.3g; **CHOL** 103mg; **IRON** 1.8mg; **SODIUM** 298mg; **CALC** 27mg

Slow-Roasted Brown Sugar and Dill Cured Salmon

Slow roasting the cured fish gives the salmon a velvety, silken texture.

½ cup packed light brown sugar
⅓ cup chopped fresh dill
2 tablespoons kosher salt
1 (3-pound) salmon fillet
Cooking spray
½ cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

1. Combine first 3 ingredients in a bowl. Place fish, skin side down, in a 13 x 9–inch baking dish. Rub sugar mixture over fish. Cover and refrigerate 8 hours.
2. Preheat oven to 175°.
3. Wipe off remaining sugar mixture from fish with a paper towel. Coat a jelly-roll pan with cooking spray. Place fish, skin side down, in pan.
4. Bake at 175° for 1 hour and 10 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork or until desired degree of doneness.
5. Combine mayonnaise and mustard; stir well. Serve mayonnaise mixture with fish. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about 5 ounces salmon).

CALORIES 333; **FAT** 19.5g (sat 3.7g, mono 6.7g, poly 7.2g); **PROTEIN** 33.9g; **CARB** 3.6g; **FIBER** 0g; **CHOL** 100mg; **IRON** 0.6mg; **SODIUM** 402mg; **CALC** 22mg

Watercress Cucumber Salad: Combine 6 cups trimmed watercress, 1½ cups thinly sliced English cucumber, and 1½ cups slivered red onion in a large bowl. Combine 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard, ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, and ⅛ teaspoon salt in a small bowl. Slowly add 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil to juice mixture, stirring constantly with a whisk; drizzle over watercress mixture. Toss gently to coat. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about 1 cup salad).

SLOW ROASTING TIPS

TRUE TEMPS

Slow roasting improves your chances of success with many meats, but a probe thermometer (pictured below) makes the process practically foolproof. Insert the probe into the meat, then set the destination temperature on the remote unit. You can monitor your food as it cooks without opening the oven door. When the food reaches the desired temperature, the alarm rings—no guesswork needed.

But here's another trick—use an oven thermometer to make sure your oven temperature is accurately calibrated. If your oven is running 50° colder than you think, it may take hours longer for dinner to reach the table.

HOW LOW IS LOW, AND IS IT SAFE?

Low-temperature roasting usually takes place at 275° or lower. We find that the closer the oven is set to 200°, the more juicy and tender the food becomes. But this mild heat will significantly bump up your cooking time: A 5-pound pork shoulder may take 8 hours or more to reach 190° and become fork-tender, for example. Items like beef and lamb roasts that you may cook to medium-rare will take less time, but perhaps twice as long as if cooked in a 400° oven. And know that as long as the meat—or poultry, in particular—reaches the internal temperature specified in our recipes, your long-anticipated dish meets food safety guidelines.

BEST CUTS FOR SLOW ROASTING

Beef: Slow roasting brings out the best in cuts like top round, eye of round, rump roast, and bottom round, cuts that are tough, lean, or contain lots of connective tissue. High heat would only make these cuts tougher. But it also works wonders with more pricey, well-marbled cuts like standing rib roast or boneless prime rib, particularly if it's important to you that the entire roast be cooked to the same level of doneness.

Pork: We love what low, slow heat does to pork shoulder (Boston butt), a cut loaded with connective tissues that just melt and make the meat sublimely tender and juicy.

Fish: Well-muscled fish like salmon and halibut take on a luxurious, velvety texture when slow roasted. The fat from salmon helps keep the fish particularly moist with this technique.

Probe thermometers ensure that you'll know when your roast is ready.

Pork shoulder responds
which makes the meat

Slow-Roasted Pulled Pork

This fork-tender meat makes a hearty and satisfying sandwich. Serve on hamburger buns with bread-and-butter pickles, if desired.

Pork:
- **2 tablespoons dark brown sugar**
- **1 tablespoon smoked paprika**
- **1 tablespoon chili powder**
- **1 teaspoon salt**
- **2 teaspoons ground cumin**
- **1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**
- **1/2 teaspoon dry mustard**
- **1/2 teaspoon ground chipotle chile pepper**
- **1 (5-pound) boneless pork shoulder (Boston butt), trimmed**
- **Cooking spray**
- **2 cups water, divided**
- **1/2 cup apple cider vinegar**
- **1/3 cup ketchup**

Sauce:
- **3/4 cup apple cider vinegar**
- **1/2 cup ketchup**
- **3 tablespoons dark brown sugar**
- **2 teaspoons smoked paprika**
- **1 teaspoon chili powder**

1. To prepare pork, combine first 8 ingredients in a small bowl. Rub sugar mixture evenly over pork. Let pork stand at room temperature 1 hour.
2. Preheat oven to 225°.
3. Place pork on the rack of a roasting pan coated with cooking spray. Pour 1 cup water in bottom of roasting pan. Place rack in pan. Bake at 225° for 1 hour.
4. Combine ½ cup vinegar and ketchup in a medium bowl; brush pork with ketchup mixture (do not remove from oven). Bake an additional 3 hours, basting every hour with ketchup mixture.
5. Pour remaining 1 cup water in bottom of roasting pan. Cover pork and pan tightly with foil. Bake an additional 3¾ hours or until a thermometer registers 190°. Remove from oven; let stand, covered, 45 minutes.
6. To prepare sauce, combine ¾ cup vinegar and remaining ingredients in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally with a whisk. Boil 5 minutes or until slightly thick. Shred pork with 2 forks. Serve with sauce. Serve shredded pork on hamburger buns with pickle chips, if desired. Yield: 16 servings (serving size: about 3 ounces pork and about 1 tablespoon sauce).

CALORIES 283; **FAT** 15.4g (sat 5.5g, mono 6.8g, poly 1.5g); **PROTEIN** 26.2g; **CARB** 8.1g; **FIBER** 0.4g; **CHOL** 90mg; **IRON** 2.1mg; **SODIUM** 402mg; **CALC** 40mg

particularly well to low-heat roasting, meltingly tender and juicy.

Slow-Roasted Malaysian-Spiced Leg of Lamb

Sriracha and ginger add kick to this spicy roast.

1 (4-pound) boneless leg of lamb, trimmed
1 tablespoon olive oil
¼ cup ketchup
3 tablespoons dark brown sugar
1 tablespoon grated peeled fresh ginger
2 tablespoons oyster sauce
1 tablespoon Sriracha (hot chile sauce, such as Huy Fong)
2 garlic cloves, minced
Cooking spray

1. Let lamb stand at room temperature 1 hour. Roll up lamb jelly-roll fashion; secure at 1-inch intervals with twine. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add oil to pan. Add lamb; cook 6 minutes, browning on all sides.
2. Combine ketchup and next 5 ingredients (through garlic) in a large bowl. Coat lamb evenly with ketchup mixture. Place lamb on the rack of a roasting pan coated with cooking spray; place rack in pan.
3. Preheat oven to 200°.
4. Bake lamb at 200° for 2 hours or until a thermometer registers 135° or until desired degree of doneness. Let stand 20 minutes before slicing. Yield: 12 servings (serving size: about 3 ounces lamb).

CALORIES 246; **FAT** 10.3g (sat 3.9g, mono 4.6g, poly 0.6g); **PROTEIN** 31.1g; **CARB** 5.3g; **FIBER** 0.1g; **CHOL** 101mg; **IRON** 2.6mg; **SODIUM** 163mg; **CALC** 15mg

Lemongrass-Mint Rice: Combine 1½ cups fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth, 1 tablespoon chopped peeled fresh lemongrass, ¼ teaspoon ground turmeric, and 1 (14.5-ounce) can light coconut milk in a medium saucepan; bring to a boil. Stir in 2 cups jasmine rice; cover, reduce heat, and simmer 15 minutes or until liquid is absorbed. Remove from heat; let stand 5 minutes. Stir in 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro, 1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint, and ½ teaspoon salt. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about ½ cup rice).

Spicy Sugar Snap Peas: Bring 3 quarts water to a boil in a large saucepan. Add 5 cups sugar snap peas; cook 2 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain well. Heat 2 teaspoons sesame oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add 2 teaspoons minced garlic to pan; cook 30 seconds, stirring frequently. Add sugar snap peas, 1 tablespoon sambal oelek, and ¼ teaspoon salt; toss well. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about ¾ cup peas).

Slow-Roasted Grape and Yogurt Parfaits

The roasting process softens the grapes slightly but heightens their flavor.

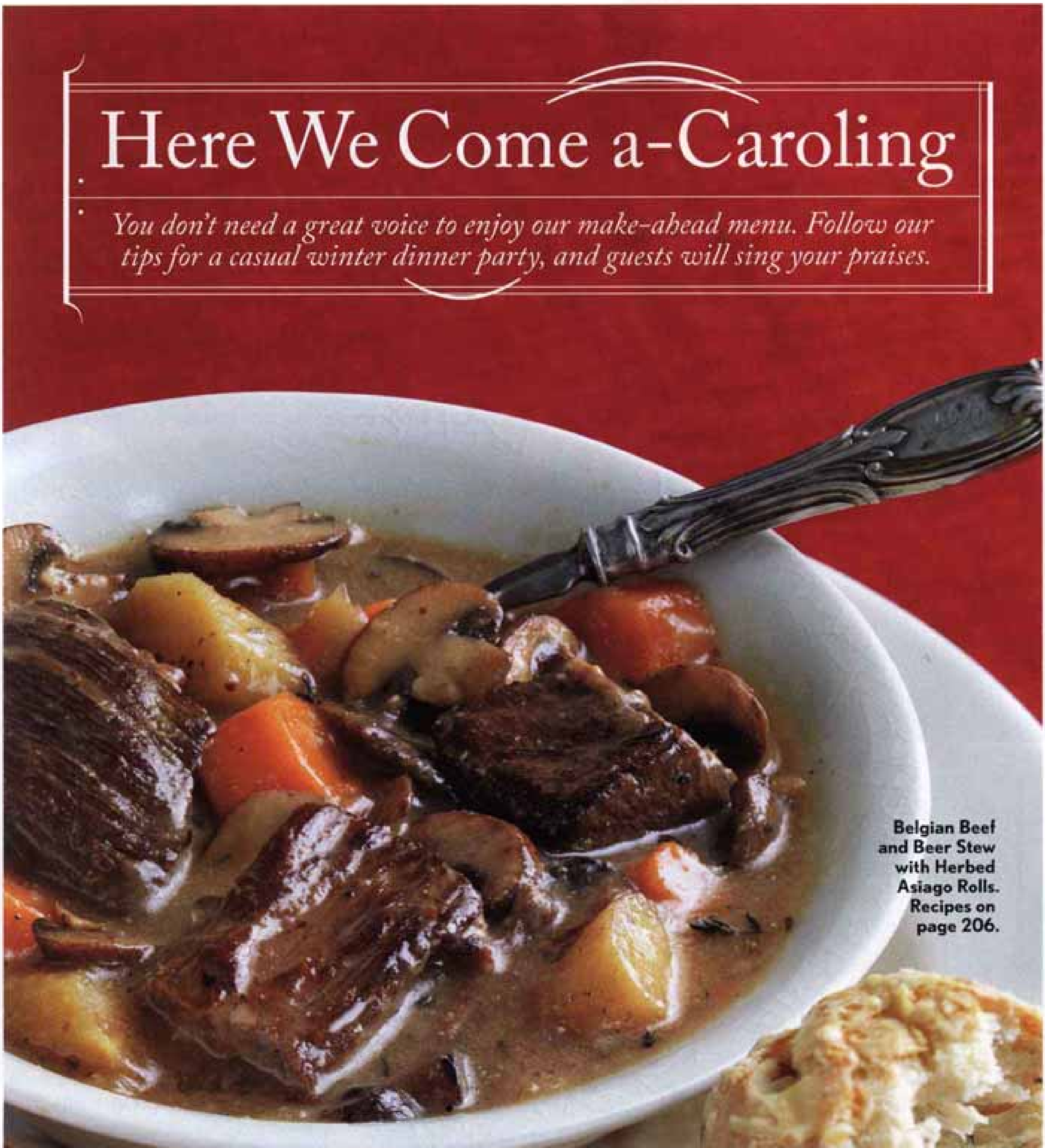
Cooking spray
2 cups seedless black grapes
2 cups seedless red grapes
3 tablespoons sugar
2 cups plain fat-free Greek-style yogurt, divided
¼ cup walnut halves, toasted and coarsely chopped, divided
8 teaspoons honey, divided
Thinly sliced fresh mint (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 200°. Coat a jelly-roll pan with cooking spray.
2. Rinse grapes; drain well, leaving slightly moist. Combine grapes and sugar in a large bowl; toss to coat. Arrange grapes on prepared jelly-roll pan. Bake at 200° for 3 hours or until grapes soften but still hold their shape. Remove from oven; cool completely.
3. Spoon ¼ cup yogurt into the bottom of each of 4 parfait glasses. Top each serving with about ⅓ cup grapes, 1½ teaspoons walnuts, and 1 teaspoon honey. Repeat layers with remaining ingredients; garnish with sliced mint, if desired. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 1 parfait).

CALORIES 298; **FAT** 5g (sat 0.5g, mono 0.7g, poly 3.5g); **PROTEIN** 12.2g; **CARB** 55.5g; **FIBER** 2g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 0.9mg; **SODIUM** 46mg; **CALC** 100mg

Here We Come a-Caroling

You don't need a great voice to enjoy our make-ahead menu. Follow our tips for a casual winter dinner party, and guests will sing your praises.



Belgian Beef and Beer Stew with Herbed Asiago Rolls. **Recipes on page 206.**

RECIPES BY *David Bonom*
PHOTOGRAPHS BY *Becky Luigart-Stayner*
STYLING BY *Cindy Barr and Mary Lyn Hill Jenkins*
FOOD STYLING BY *Charlotte Fekete*

NO MATTER HOW DUBIOUS THE SINGING—and we have perpetrated our share of off-key *fa-la-las* over the years—a round of joyful caroling is a gift to the neighborhood and an appetite-builder for the singers. A good walkabout of caroling makes everyone happy, and then eager to eat and drink. We find no statistics on the incidence of caroling in America but suspect it may be on the wane. And so we offer this caroling menu as a gift to those who would defend a sacred tradition—and eat well while doing it!

CAROLING PARTY MENU

- Chili-Spiced Almonds
- Warm Caramelized Onion Dip
- Frisée Salad with Maple-Bacon Vinaigrette
- Belgian Beef and Beer Stew
- Herbed Asiago Rolls
- Chocolate-Hazelnut Meringues
- Brown Sugar Cheesecake with Cranberry Compote
- Applejack-Spiked Hot Cider
- Vanilla-Almond Steamer

Applejack-Spiked Hot Cider

Take this drink on the go in a thermos, or let its sweet, spiced scent fill your home. Applejack is a cider-based brandy; Calvados, the French version, would also work in this drink.

2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons dark brown sugar
10 black peppercorns
8 whole allspice berries
5 whole cloves
2 (3-inch) cinnamon sticks
6 cups apple cider
1 tablespoon honey
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 (2-inch) orange rind strips
2 (2-inch) lemon rind strips
3/4 cup applejack brandy

1. Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Stir in sugar and next 4 ingredients (through cinnamon sticks); cook 1 minute. Add cider and next 4 ingredients (through lemon rind); bring to a simmer. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer 15 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in applejack. Strain; discard solids. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about 2/3 cup).

CALORIES 189; **FAT** 2.8g (sat 1.8g, mono 0.7g, poly 0.1g); **PROTEIN** 0g; **CARB** 28.1g; **FIBER** 0g; **CHOL** 8mg; **IRON** 1mg; **SODIUM** 41mg; **CALC** 4mg

Chili-Spiced Almonds

These flavorful nuts make a convenient, portable snack. Store at room temperature in an airtight container for up to a week.

1 tablespoon water
1 large egg white
1 pound raw, unblanched almonds
1/2 cup sugar
1 tablespoon salt
1 teaspoon Spanish smoked paprika
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1/2 teaspoon chili powder
Cooking spray

1. Preheat oven to 300°.
2. Combine 1 tablespoon water and egg white in a large bowl; stir with a whisk until foamy. Add almonds; toss well to coat. Place almonds in a colander, and drain 5 minutes.
3. Combine almonds, sugar, and next 5 ingredients (through chili powder) in a large bowl; toss to coat. Spread almond mixture in a single layer on a jelly-roll pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 300° for 15 minutes. Stir almond mixture; reduce oven temperature to 275°. Bake an additional 40 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes. Remove from oven; cool 5 minutes. Break apart any clusters. Cool completely. Yield: 4 cups (serving size: 2 tablespoons).

CALORIES 98; **FAT** 7.2g (sat 0.5g, mono 4.5g, poly 1.6g); **PROTEIN** 3.1g; **CARB** 6g; **FIBER** 1.8g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 0mg; **SODIUM** 221mg; **CALC** 1mg

neighborhood, then head home to feast on a cozy winter dinner.

Take along spiced nuts and hot cider for sustenance while caroling, or snack on them in the warmth of your home.

ingredients, stirring until blended and cheese melts. Yield: 12 servings (serving size: 3 tablespoons).

CALORIES 81; **FAT** 4.9g (sat 2.3g, mono 1.2g, poly 0.6g); **PROTEIN** 3.1g; **CARB** 7.7g; **FIBER** 0.9g; **CHOL** 12mg; **IRON** 0mg; **SODIUM** 206mg; **CALC** 58mg

Frisée Salad with Maple-Bacon Vinaigrette

Bitter greens like radicchio and endive provide a pleasant counterpoint to the sweet, slightly smoky dressing, while wispy, curly frisée gives the dish body. You can prepare the salad dressing up to a day ahead and reheat it to serve. But don't dress the salad until the last minute so the greens stay crisp.

6 cups torn frisée leaves
4 cups (¾-inch) diagonally cut Belgian endive (about 3 heads)
1 cup thinly sliced radicchio
4 slices center-cut bacon
¼ cup chopped shallots
2 tablespoons champagne vinegar
4 teaspoons maple syrup
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
¼ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
3 ounces (about ¾ cup) crumbled blue cheese

1. Combine first 3 ingredients in a large bowl. Cook bacon in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat until crisp. Remove bacon from pan, reserving drippings; crumble. Add shallots to drippings in pan; cook 30 seconds, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; stir in champagne vinegar, maple syrup, extra-virgin olive oil, Dijon mustard, salt, and freshly ground black pepper. Pour dressing over salad greens; toss well to combine. Add crumbled bacon and cheese to greens; toss gently. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about ¾ cup).

CALORIES 96; **FAT** 6g (sat 3g, mono 2.3g, poly 0.3g); **PROTEIN** 5g; **CARB** 6.3g; **FIBER** 2g; **CHOL** 13mg; **IRON** 0.7mg; **SODIUM** 352mg; **CALC** 94mg

ORCHESTRATING THE PARTY

UP TO 2 WEEKS AHEAD
Bake and freeze rolls.

UP TO 2 DAYS AHEAD
Make meringues.

UP TO 1 DAY AHEAD
Cook stew.
Caramelize onions for dip.
Make spiced almonds.
Prepare and chill salad dressing.
Bake and chill cheesecake.
Cook and chill cranberry compote.

1 DAY AHEAD
Cook and chill milk mixture for steamer.
Prepare and chill cider.

3 HOURS AHEAD
Cut and combine salad greens.

1 HOUR AHEAD
Thaw rolls at room temperature.

45 MINUTES AHEAD
Heat stew.

15 MINUTES AHEAD
Heat onions and mix dip.

5 MINUTES AHEAD
Reheat cider and steamer.
Heat dressing and toss salad.
Pull cheesecake and compote from refrigerator.

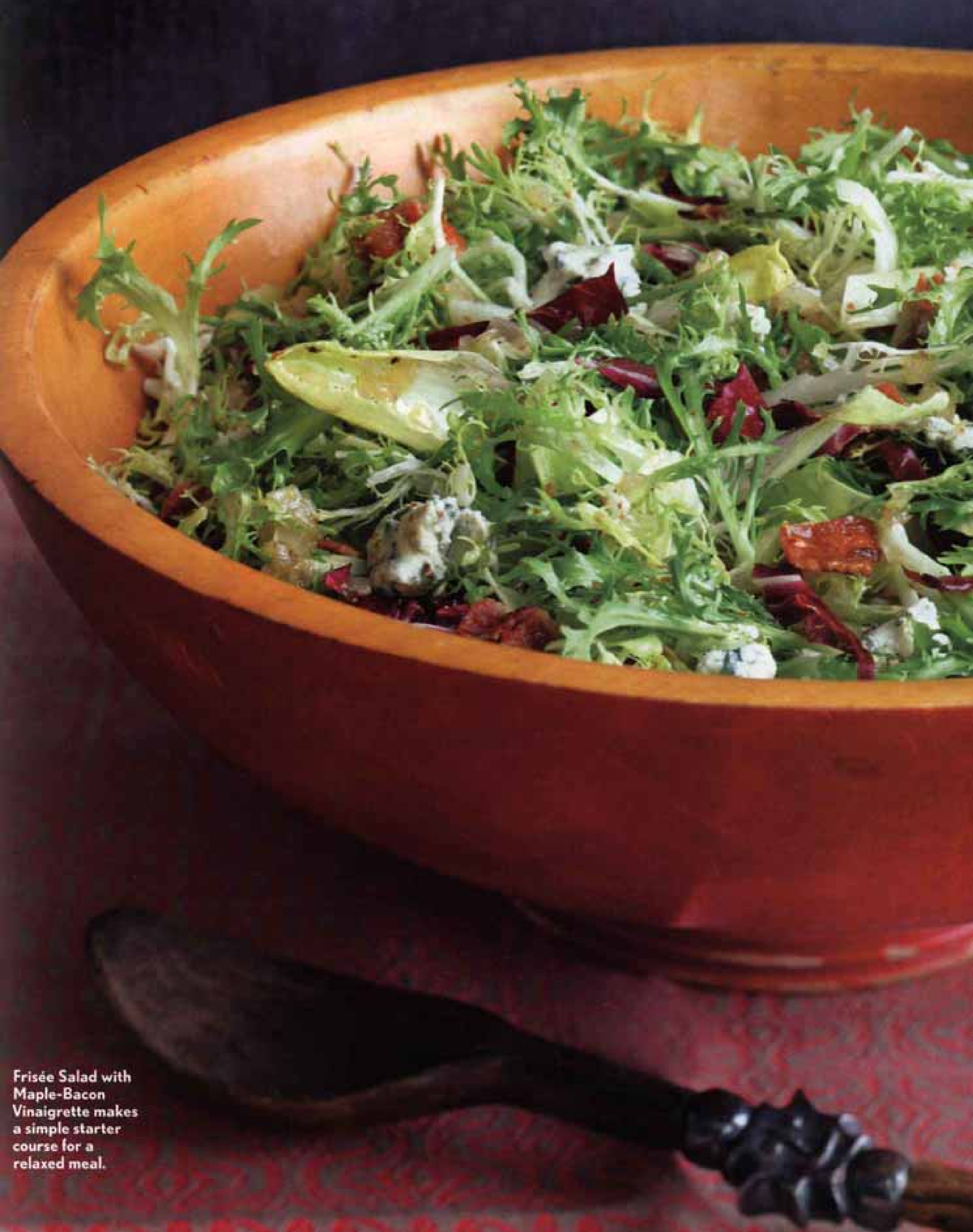
Warm Caramelized Onion Dip

Serve with hearty crackers or slices of French bread.

2 teaspoons olive oil
4 cups chopped onion (about 2 large onions)
¾ teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
½ cup light sour cream
⅓ cup (about 1½ ounces) grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
⅓ cup (3 ounces) ⅓-less-fat cream cheese
⅓ cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¼ teaspoon hot pepper sauce (such as Tabasco)
¼ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

1. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, swirling to coat pan. Add chopped onion and thyme to pan; sauté 10 minutes or until golden brown. Reduce heat to low; cook 20 minutes or until onions are deep golden brown, stirring occasionally. Remove onion mixture from heat. Add sour cream and the remaining

Our make-ahead strategy keeps cooking minimal once folks arrive.



Frisée Salad with Maple-Bacon Vinaigrette makes a simple starter course for a relaxed meal.

Vanilla-Almond Steamers and Chocolate-Hazelnut Meringues enrich cold-weather revelries.

Vanilla-Almond Steamer

This hot drink pairs nicely with Chocolate-Hazelnut Meringues. For a grown-up twist, spike it with brandy, bourbon, gold rum, or cinnamon schnapps. Make the steamer mixture up to a day ahead, refrigerate, then reheat when ready to serve.

8 cups 1% low-fat milk
1/2 cup sugar
2 (3-inch) cinnamon sticks
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon almond extract
Ground cinnamon (optional)
Cinnamon sticks (optional)

1. Combine the milk and sugar in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat; cook until sugar dissolves, stirring frequently. Add cinnamon sticks to milk mixture; cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally (do not boil). Remove from heat; let stand 20 minutes. Stir in extracts. Place pan over medium-high heat; cook 3 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Remove and discard cinnamon sticks. Garnish with ground cinnamon and cinnamon sticks, if desired. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about 1 cup).

CALORIES 154; **FAT** 2.6g (sat 1.6g, mono 0.8g, poly 0.1g); **PROTEIN** 8g; **CARB** 24.3g; **FIBER** 0g; **CHOL** 10mg; **IRON** 0.1mg; **SODIUM** 123mg; **CALC** 300mg

Chocolate-Hazelnut Meringues

Make up to two days ahead, and store in an airtight container at room temperature. The chocolate and hazelnut coating adds textural interest to these airy, sweet treats.

5 large egg whites
1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 ounces semisweet chocolate
1/3 cup blanched whole hazelnuts, toasted and finely chopped

1. Preheat oven to 250°.
2. Place egg whites in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at high speed until foamy. Add cream of tartar and salt, beating until soft peaks form. Gradually add sugars, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating until stiff peaks form. Add vanilla; beat 1 minute.
3. Cover two baking sheets with parchment paper. Spoon 24 (2-inch-round) mounds onto prepared baking sheets. Place in oven; bake at 250° for 1 hour or until dry to touch, rotating pans halfway through cooking. (Meringues are done when surface is dry and meringues can be removed from paper without sticking to fingers.) Turn oven off. Cool meringues in oven 1 hour. Remove from oven; carefully remove meringues from paper.
4. Place chocolate in a medium glass bowl. Microwave at HIGH 1 minute or until almost melted, stirring until smooth. Dip side of each meringue in melted chocolate and chopped hazelnuts. Yield: 12 servings (serving size: 2 meringues).

CALORIES 135; **FAT** 4.3g (sat 1.4g, mono 1.7g, poly 0.3g); **PROTEIN** 2.6g; **CARB** 22.7g; **FIBER** 0.4g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 0.6mg; **SODIUM** 51mg; **CALC** 13mg

Harmonious flavors abound in this menu—what's more, dessert that

Ruby-red Cranberry Compote coats Brown Sugar Cheesecake with bold seasonal flavor.

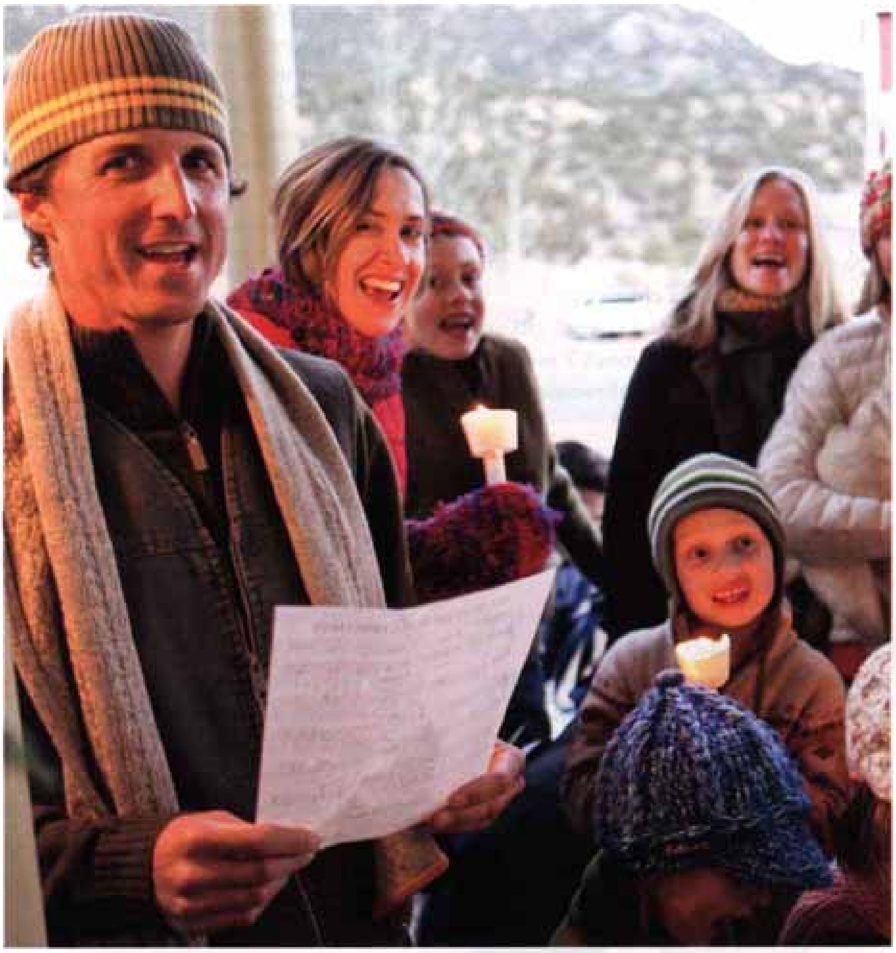
can be made the day before lets you end the event on a sweet note.

Brown Sugar Cheesecake with Cranberry Compote

Thick cranberry sauce lends brilliant color and sweet-tart taste to this rich cheesecake.

Cheesecake:
1¾ cups gingersnap crumbs (about 30 cookies, finely crushed)
2 tablespoons butter, melted
1 tablespoon fat-free milk
Cooking spray
2 cups (1 pound) ⅓-less-fat cream cheese
1 cup (8 ounces) fat-free cream cheese
½ cup packed dark brown sugar
¼ cup granulated sugar
1.3 ounces cake flour (about ⅓ cup)
2 large eggs
½ cup reduced-fat sour cream
2 tablespoons maple syrup
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Compote:
2 cups fresh cranberries (about 8 ounces)
1 cup shredded peeled ripe pear (1 medium)
½ cup packed dark brown sugar
¾ cup fresh orange juice (about 3 oranges)
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon



1. Preheat oven to 400°.

2. To prepare cheesecake, combine gingersnap crumbs, butter, and milk in a medium bowl; stir with a fork. Firmly press mixture into bottom of a 9-inch springform pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 400° for 3 minutes; cool on a wire rack. Reduce oven temperature to 325°.

3. Place cheeses in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at high speed until smooth. Add sugars, beating until well combined. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into a dry measuring cup; level with a knife. Add flour to cheese mixture; beat well. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Add sour cream, syrup, and vanilla; beat well. Pour cheese mixture into crust. Bake at 325° for 40 minutes or until cheesecake center barely moves when pan is touched. Turn oven off. Remove cheesecake; run a knife around outside edge. Return cheesecake to oven, and partially open oven door. Cool cheesecake 1 hour in oven. Remove from oven; cool completely on a wire rack. Cover and chill at least 8 hours.

4. To prepare compote, combine cranberries and remaining ingredients in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer 5 minutes or until the cranberries pop, stirring frequently. Cool to room temperature, and serve over cheesecake. Yield: 16 servings (serving size: 1 slice cheesecake and about 2 tablespoons compote).

CALORIES 272; **FAT** 10.6g (sat 6.2g, mono 3.1g, poly 0.5g); **PROTEIN** 7.4g; **CARB** 37.2g; **FIBER** 1.4g; **CHOL** 55mg; **IRON** 1.5mg; **SODIUM** 320mg; **CALC** 92mg

Belgian Beef and Beer Stew

An amber Belgian beer is ideal in this dish, though most amber beers or brown ales—such as Newcastle—would work just fine. Garnish with fresh thyme.

3 center-cut bacon slices, cut into ½-inch pieces
2½ pounds boneless chuck roast, trimmed and cut into 1½-inch cubes
2 cups chopped onion (about 2 medium)
5 cups sliced cremini mushrooms (about 12 ounces)
2 garlic cloves, minced
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 (12-ounce) bottle amber beer
2 cups (½-inch-thick) slices carrot (about ½ pound)
1¾ cups (½-inch-thick) slices parsnip (about ½ pound)
1 cup fat-free, less-sodium beef broth
2 tablespoons country-style Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon dried thyme
½ teaspoon caraway seeds
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 bay leaf

1. Cook bacon in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat until crisp. Remove bacon from pan, reserving drippings; set aside. Add half of beef to drippings in pan; cook 5 minutes, browning on all sides. Remove beef from pan. Repeat procedure with remaining beef.

2. Add onion to pan; sauté 4 minutes. Stir in mushrooms and garlic; sauté 4 minutes or until half of liquid evaporates. Stir in flour; cook 2 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in beer, scraping pan to loosen browned bits. Add bacon, beef, carrot, and remaining ingredients to pan; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 2 hours or until beef is tender. Discard bay leaf. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1 cup).

CALORIES 373; **FAT** 12.2g (sat 5g, mono 3.2g, poly 0.4g); **PROTEIN** 40.4g; **CARB** 18.4g; **FIBER** 3.9g; **CHOL** 118mg; **IRON** 5.1mg; **SODIUM** 780mg; **CALC** 56mg

BEER NOTE With Belgian Beef and Beer Stew, focus on Belgian beers in the style of Dubbel or Brune. These words indicate a dark-colored, malty beer that goes well with braised beef. Moinette Brune ($9/750 ml) offers fruity sweetness that works with caramelized vegetables and a bready quality that matches any stew, while the beer's lively effervescence and surprisingly light body won't weigh down a winter meal.

—Jeffery Lindenmuth

Herbed Asiago Rolls

Fragrant herbs and spices fleck these soft rolls, while sharp cheese adds a kick. Bake a batch up to two weeks ahead and freeze; thaw at room temperature.

2 tablespoons honey, divided
1 package active dry yeast (about 2¼ teaspoons)
¾ cup warm water (100° to 110°)
1 large egg, lightly beaten
11.25 ounces all-purpose flour, divided (about 2½ cups)
¾ cup (3 ounces) shredded Asiago cheese, divided
¾ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon dried basil
½ teaspoon fennel seeds
¼ teaspoon ground red pepper
Cooking spray

1. Dissolve 1 tablespoon honey and yeast in ¾ cup warm water in a large bowl; let stand 5 minutes. Stir in the remaining 1 tablespoon honey and egg. Weigh or lightly spoon 9 ounces (about 2 cups) all-purpose flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine 9 ounces flour, ½ cup cheese, and next 5 ingredients (through pepper) in a bowl, stirring with a whisk. Add flour mixture to yeast mixture, stirring to form a soft dough. Turn dough out onto a floured surface. Knead until smooth and elastic (about 8 minutes); add enough of remaining 2.25 ounces (about ½ cup) flour, 1 tablespoon at a time, to prevent the dough from sticking to hands.

2. Place dough in a large bowl coated with cooking spray, turning to coat top. Cover and let rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, 1 hour or until doubled in size. (Gently press two fingers into dough. If indentation remains, dough has risen enough.) Punch dough down; cover and let rise 1 hour or until doubled in size.

3. Preheat oven to 425°.

4. Punch dough down; cover and let rest 5 minutes. Divide dough into 12 equal portions. Working with one portion of dough at a time (cover remaining dough to prevent drying), roll each portion into a ball. Place the balls 2 inches apart on a baking sheet coated with cooking spray. Cover and let rise for 30 minutes. Uncover balls; sprinkle remaining ¼ cup cheese over tops of balls. Bake at 425° for 18 minutes or until browned. Remove from baking sheet; cool 10 minutes on wire rack. Yield: 1 dozen rolls (serving size: 1 roll).

CALORIES 143; **FAT** 3g (sat 1.4g, mono 0.8g, poly 0.2g); **PROTEIN** 5.3g; **CARB** 24.1g; **FIBER** 0.9g; **CHOL** 24mg; **IRON** 1.5mg; **SODIUM** 235mg; **CALC** 73mg

—Additional recipes by Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough

SO EASY, SO ELEGANT

A DAZZLING DESSERT DOESN'T HAVE TO START FROM SCRATCH—A FEW STORE-BOUGHT INGREDIENTS LET YOU SPEND LESS TIME IN THE KITCHEN AND MORE TIME RELISHING THE PRAISE.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY **RANDY MAYOR**
STYLING BY **JAN GAUTRO**
FOOD STYLING BY **JAMIE KIMM**
ILLUSTRATIONS BY **RANDY GLASS**

Lemon-Almond Tarts

SECRET STORE-BOUGHT INGREDIENT:

BOTTLED LEMON CURD

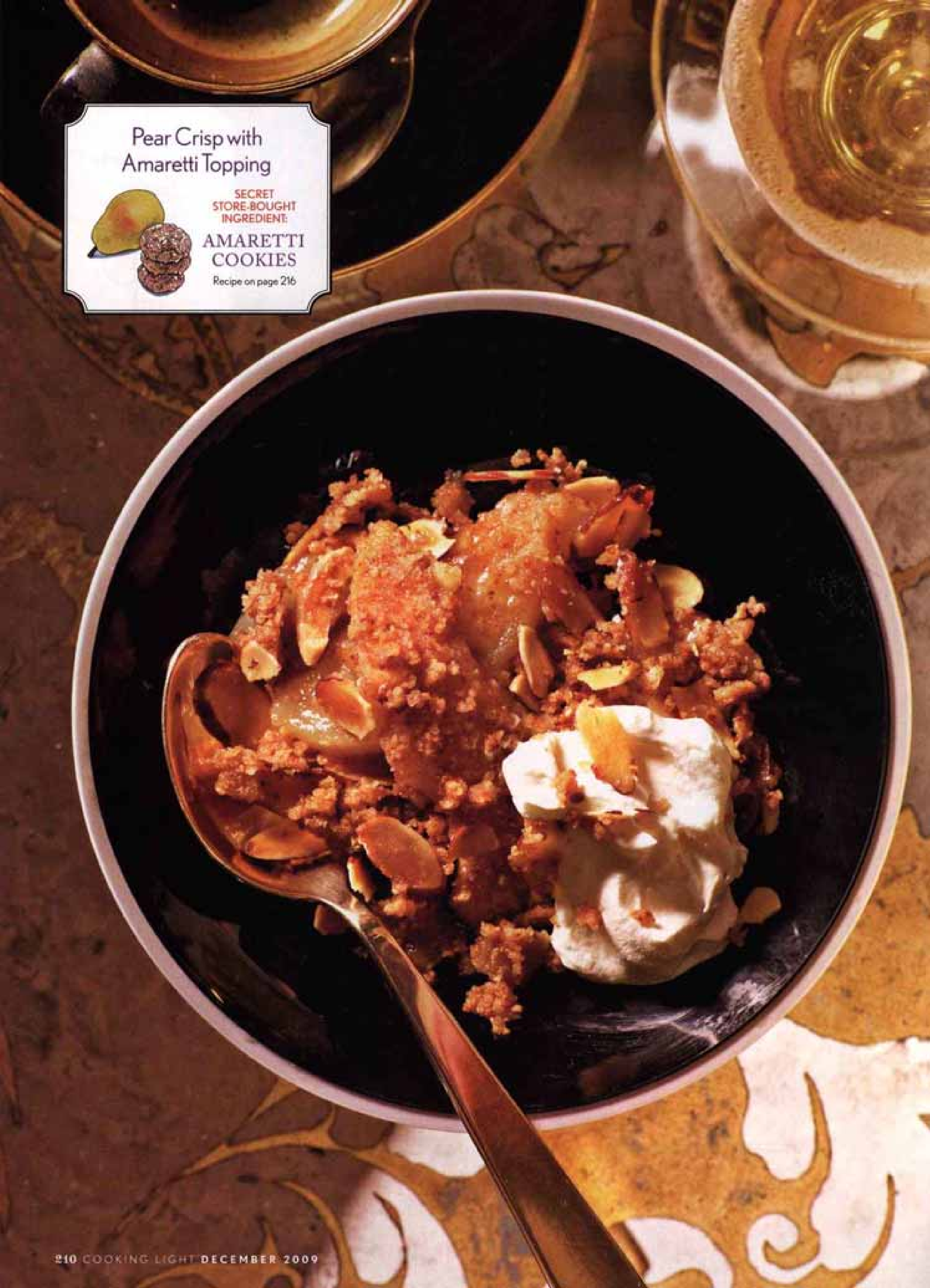
Recipe on page 218

Pear Crisp with Amaretti Topping

SECRET STORE-BOUGHT INGREDIENT:

AMARETTI COOKIES

Recipe on page 216

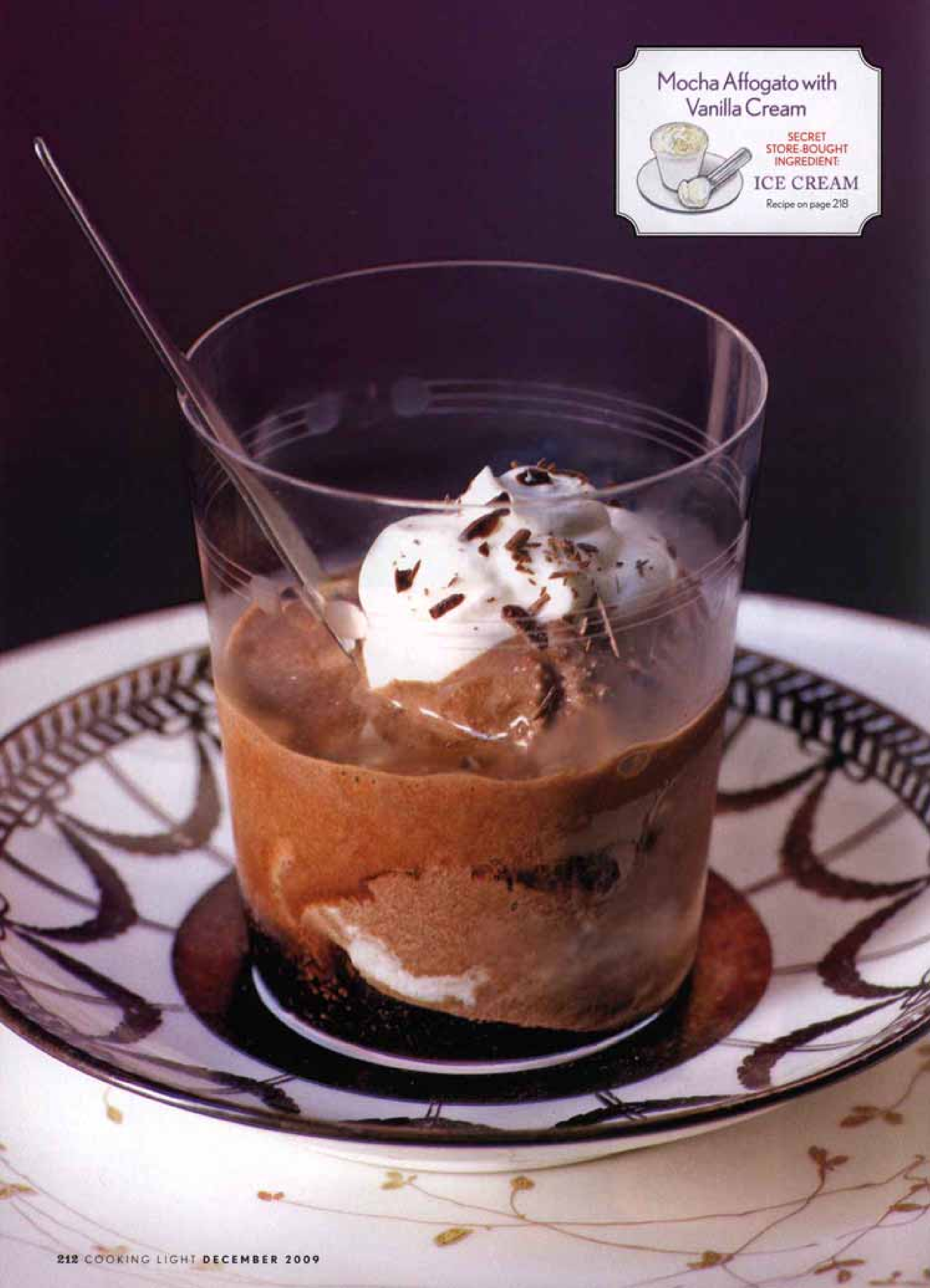


Cherry Tortoni

SECRET STORE-BOUGHT INGREDIENTS:

FROZEN WHIPPED TOPPING, FROZEN CHERRIES

Recipe on page 216



Mocha Affogato with Vanilla Cream

SECRET STORE-BOUGHT INGREDIENT:

ICE CREAM

Recipe on page 218

Apple Strudel

SECRET STORE-BOUGHT INGREDIENT:

FROZEN PUFF PASTRY

Recipe on page 218

Chocolate-Caramel Angel Food Cake

SECRET STORE-BOUGHT INGREDIENTS:

ANGEL FOOD CAKE MIX, CHOCOLATE BAR

Recipe on page 221

Chocolate Baklava

SECRET STORE-BOUGHT INGREDIENTS:

NUTELLA, FROZEN PHYLLO DOUGH

Recipe on page 221

Pear Crisp with Amaretti Topping

Look for amaretti cookies at specialty stores and gourmet grocers. And choose slightly under-ripe, firm pears.

6 peeled Anjou or Bartlett pears, cored and cut into ¼-inch-thick slices (about 2½ pounds)
½ cup packed brown sugar, divided
2.85 ounces all-purpose flour (about ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons), divided
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
⅛ teaspoon salt
Cooking spray
12 amaretti cookies (Italian almond macaroons)
6 tablespoons chilled butter, cut into small pieces
⅓ cup sliced almonds, toasted
½ cup heavy whipping cream
2 tablespoons powdered sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Place pears in a large bowl. Sprinkle with 6 tablespoons brown sugar, 2 tablespoons flour, juice, and salt; toss well to coat. Transfer mixture to an 11 x 7–inch baking dish coated with cooking spray.
3. Place cookies in a food processor; process until finely ground. Weigh or lightly spoon remaining 2.25 ounces (about ½ cup) flour into a dry measuring cup. Combine 2.25 ounces flour, cookie crumbs, and remaining 2 tablespoons brown sugar in a medium bowl; cut in butter with a pastry blender or 2 knives until mixture resembles coarse meal. Stir in nuts. Sprinkle crumb mixture evenly over pear mixture. Bake at 350° for 50 minutes or until pears are tender. Let stand 10 minutes.
4. Combine cream and powdered sugar in a medium bowl. Beat with a mixer at high speed until stiff peaks form. Divide crisp evenly among 9 bowls; top each serving with about 1 tablespoon whipped cream. Yield: 9 servings.

CALORIES 320; **FAT** 14.7g (sat 8g, mono 4.5g, poly 0.9g); **PROTEIN** 3.4g; **CARB** 46.7g; **FIBER** 2.3g; **CHOL** 38mg; **IRON** 0.9mg; **SODIUM** 114mg; **CALC** 47mg

Cherry Tortoni

Put frozen whipped topping and frozen cherries to delightful use in this impressive finale. If you don't have 3-inch ring molds, which look like round cookie cutters, use smooth-sided mini charlotte molds with removable bottoms. Or you can freeze the mixture in a 9-inch springform pan and cut it into wedges for a more homey presentation.

⅔ cup sugar, divided
1 tablespoon amaretto (almond-flavored liqueur)
1 (12-ounce) package frozen pitted dark sweet cherries
1 tablespoon water
2 teaspoons cornstarch
⅓ cup sliced almonds
12 vanilla wafers
½ teaspoon cream of tartar
Dash of salt
4 large egg whites
1 (8-ounce) container frozen reduced-calorie whipped topping, thawed

1. Combine ⅓ cup sugar, amaretto, and sweet cherries in a medium saucepan; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and cook 10 minutes or until sugar dissolves and cherries are soft, stirring occasionally. Combine 1 tablespoon water and cornstarch in a small bowl, stirring until smooth. Stir cornstarch mixture into cherry mixture; bring to a boil. Cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Spoon cherry mixture into a bowl; cover and chill 1 hour. Strain mixture through a sieve over a bowl, reserving cherry mixture and juice. Cover and chill juice.
2. Place almonds and wafers in a food processor; process until coarsely ground.
3. Combine remaining ⅓ cup sugar, cream of tartar, salt, and egg whites in the top of a double boiler. Cook over simmering water until a thermometer registers 160° (about 6 minutes), stirring constantly with a whisk. Remove from heat. Beat with an electric mixer at high speed until stiff peaks form. Spoon whipped topping into a large bowl. Gently fold one-fourth of egg white mixture into whipped topping; gently fold in remaining egg white mixture. Fold ½ cup almond mixture into egg white mixture; gently fold in strained cherry mixture.
4. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper; place 10 (3-inch) ring molds on parchment. Spoon ½ cup egg white mixture into each mold; sprinkle the remaining almond mixture evenly over tops. Cover loosely with plastic wrap; freeze 4 hours or until set. Let stand 10 minutes at room temperature. Run a knife around the outside edge; remove from molds. Serve tortonis with the reserved cherry juice. Yield: 10 servings (serving size: 1 [3-inch] tortoni and 2½ teaspoons sauce).

CALORIES 177; **FAT** 5.4g (sat 2.8g, mono 1.4g, poly 0.5g); **PROTEIN** 3.5g; **CARB** 29.6g; **FIBER** 1.3g; **CHOL** 1mg; **IRON** 0.4mg; **SODIUM** 68mg; **CALC** 33mg

WINE NOTE When matching a wine with desserts, like Cherry Tortoni, an off-dry or slightly sweet wine will hold up where a dry wine is quickly overwhelmed. Alice White Lexia 2007 ($8) is fun and fruity with big aromas of honey, flowers, and peaches. The wine has a good bit of sweetness that works well with fruity desserts, while the crisp finish keeps it bright and refreshing rather than cloying. –Jeffery Lindenmuth

And you thought they were delicious
before they had a cookie attached to them.

DELIGHTFULLY DELICIOUS HERSHEY'S® KISSES® PEANUT BUTTER BLOSSOMS RECIPE

48 HERSHEY'S® KISSES® Milk Chocolates
1/2 cup shortening
3/4 cup REESE'S® Creamy Peanut Butter
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1/3 cup packed light brown sugar
1 egg
2 tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
Granulated sugar

1. Heat oven to 375°F. Remove wrappers from chocolates.

2. Beat shortening and peanut butter in large bowl. Add 1/3 cup granulated and brown sugar; beat until fluffy. Add egg, milk and vanilla; beat well. Stir together flour, baking soda and salt; gradually beat into mixture.

3. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll in sugar; place on ungreased cookie sheet.

4. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Immediately press a KISSES® Chocolate into center of each cookie. Remove from cookie sheet to wire rack. Cool completely. Makes about 4 dozen cookies.

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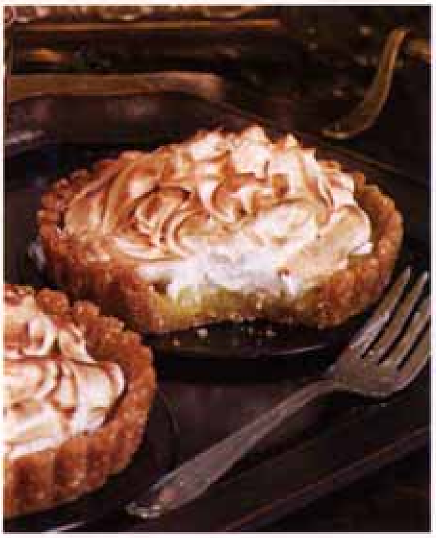

Lemon-Almond Tarts

If you don't have mini tart pans, make this dessert in a (9-inch) tart pan.

1/2 cup blanched almonds
3 tablespoons brown sugar
36 vanilla wafers
1/4 cup butter, melted
Cooking spray
1 (10-ounce) jar lemon curd
3 large egg whites
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/4 cup water

1. Preheat oven to 400°.
2. Combine first 3 ingredients in a food processor; process until finely ground. With motor on, drizzle butter through food chute; process until blended. Press about 1/4 cup crumbs into the bottom and up sides of each of 8 (4-inch) tart pans coated with cooking spray. Bake at 400° for 10 minutes or until toasted. Cool.
3. Preheat broiler.
4. Spoon curd evenly into crusts. Place egg whites and salt in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at high speed until soft peaks form. Combine granulated sugar and 1/4 cup water in a saucepan; bring to a boil. Cook, without stirring, until a thermometer registers 250°. Pour hot syrup in a thin stream over egg whites, beating until stiff peaks form. Spread egg white mixture over tarts. Broil 30 seconds or until lightly browned. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1 tart).

CALORIES 342; **FAT** 14.7g (sat 5.4g, mono 5.2g, poly 1.3g); **PROTEIN** 3.9g; **CARB** 52.4g; **FIBER** 5g; **CHOL** 44mg; **IRON** 1mg; **SODIUM** 182mg; **CALC** 37mg

Mocha Affogato with Vanilla Cream

Store-bought ice cream serves as the base for this complex-flavored, creamy treat.

1/2 cup vanilla low-fat yogurt
1/4 cup heavy whipping cream
1 tablespoon powdered sugar
4 cups chocolate low-fat ice cream
1 cup hot brewed espresso
1/2 cup Frangelico (hazelnut-flavored liqueur)
1 ounce bittersweet chocolate, shaved

1. Place a colander in a medium bowl. Line colander with 4 layers of cheesecloth, allowing cheesecloth to extend over outside edges. Spoon yogurt into colander. Refrigerate, uncovered, for 1 hour. Spoon drained yogurt into a bowl; discard liquid.
2. Place whipping cream and sugar in a bowl; beat with a mixer at high speed until stiff peaks form (about 2 minutes). Gently fold whipped cream into yogurt. Refrigerate cream mixture until ready to serve.
3. Spoon 1/2 cup ice cream into each of 8 glasses; top each serving with 2 tablespoons hot espresso and 1 tablespoon liqueur. Top each serving with 2 tablespoons cream mixture; sprinkle each serving evenly with shaved chocolate. Serve immediately. Yield: 8 servings.

CALORIES 289; **FAT** 6.5g (sat 3.6g, mono 2g, poly 0.3g); **PROTEIN** 3.2g; **CARB** 47.9g; **FIBER** 0.3g; **CHOL** 16mg; **IRON** 0.5mg; **SODIUM** 72mg; **CALC** 112mg

Apple Strudel

2 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup packed brown sugar
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon salt
6 medium Granny Smith apples, peeled and thinly sliced (about 2 1/2 pounds)
1 sheet frozen puff pastry dough, thawed
1/4 cup chopped walnuts
2 tablespoons granulated sugar

1. Preheat oven to 400°.
2. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Stir in brown sugar, juice, cinnamon, salt, and apples. Cover, reduce heat, and cook 10 minutes or until apples are tender, stirring occasionally. Remove apples from pan; cool.
3. Roll pastry to a 15 x 12-inch rectangle. Spoon apple mixture along 1 long edge of pastry; roll up jelly-roll fashion. Gently press seam to seal.
4. Place nuts and granulated sugar in a food processor; pulse until finely ground. Sprinkle strudel with the nut mixture, pressing gently. Place strudel on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake at 400° for 25 minutes or until golden. Let stand 5 minutes; slice. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1 slice).

CALORIES 318; **FAT** 17g (sat 5g, mono 7.6g, poly 3.4g); **PROTEIN** 3.2g; **CARB** 41.6g; **FIBER** 2.6g; **CHOL** 8mg; **IRON** 1.2mg; **SODIUM** 135mg; **CALC** 23mg

WINE NOTE Pair Apple Strudel with the slightly fizzy, off-dry pink Moscato from Innocent Bystander in Victoria, Australia ($12, 375 ml.). **–Sara Schneider**

Chocolate Baklava

Layered phyllo dough and Nutella—the creamy chocolate-hazelnut spread—form the base of this nutty pastry dish that's sure to be a crowd-pleaser.

3/4 cup honey
1/2 cup water
1 (3-inch) cinnamon stick
1 cup hazelnut-chocolate spread (such as Nutella)
1/2 cup toasted hazelnuts, coarsely chopped
1/2 cup roasted pistachios, coarsely chopped
1/3 cup blanched toasted almonds, coarsely chopped
1/3 cup toasted walnuts, coarsely chopped
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon salt
Cooking spray
24 (14 x 9-inch) sheets frozen phyllo dough, thawed
1/2 cup butter, melted

1. Combine the first 3 ingredients in a medium saucepan over low heat; stir until honey dissolves. Increase heat to medium; cook, without stirring, until a candy thermometer registers 230° (about 10 minutes). Remove from heat; keep warm. Discard cinnamon stick.
2. Preheat oven to 350°.
3. Place hazelnut-chocolate spread in a microwave-safe bowl; microwave at HIGH for 30 seconds or until melted. Combine hazelnuts and next 5 ingredients (through salt). Lightly coat a 13 x 9-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Working with 1 phyllo sheet at a time (cover remaining dough to prevent drying), place 1 phyllo sheet lengthwise in bottom of prepared pan, allowing ends of sheet to extend over edges of dish; lightly brush with butter. Repeat procedure with 5 phyllo sheets and butter. Drizzle about 1/3 cup melted hazelnut-chocolate spread over phyllo. Sprinkle evenly with one-third of nut mixture (about 1/2 cup). Repeat procedure twice with phyllo, butter, hazelnut-chocolate spread, and nut mixture. Top last layer of nut mixture with remaining 6 sheets phyllo, each lightly brushed with butter. Press gently into pan.
4. Make 3 lengthwise cuts and 5 crosswise cuts to form 24 portions using a sharp knife. Bake at 350° for 35 minutes or until phyllo is golden. Remove from oven. Drizzle honey mixture over baklava. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Cover; store at room temperature. Yield: 24 servings (serving size: 1 piece).

CALORIES 238; **FAT** 13.4g (sat 4.3g, mono 5.6g, poly 2g); **PROTEIN** 4g; **CARB** 27.8g; **FIBER** 1.6g; **CHOL** 10mg; **IRON** 1.3mg; **SODIUM** 148mg; **CALC** 29mg

Chocolate-Caramel Angel Food Cake

Drizzle the caramel quickly before it cools.

1 (16-ounce) box white angel food cake mix
2 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
1/4 cup packed brown sugar
1/4 cup butter
3 tablespoons heavy whipping cream
Dash of salt
3 tablespoons chopped pecans, toasted

1. Bake cake according to package instructions. Cool completely.
2. Place chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave at HIGH for 30 seconds or until melted, stirring every 10 seconds. Drizzle chocolate over cake. Combine brown sugar and next 3 ingredients (through salt) in a small, heavy saucepan over medium-high heat; bring to a boil, stirring just until sugar dissolves. Reduce heat, and cook 4 minutes (do not stir). Remove from heat; quickly drizzle caramel over cake. Top with pecans. Yield: 12 servings (serving size: 1 slice).

CALORIES 241; **FAT** 8.7g (sat 4.4g, mono 2.2g, poly 0.7g); **PROTEIN** 4g; **CARB** 39.4g; **FIBER** 0.6g; **CHOL** 15mg; **IRON** 0.4mg; **SODIUM** 321mg; **CALC** 54mg

Kathy Farrell-Kingsley is the author of several cookbooks. (Additional recipes by Julianna Grimes.)

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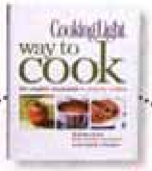
The Enlightened Cook

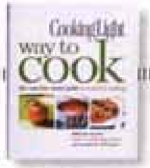
YOUR BONUS RECIPE SECTION FOR DECEMBER



An excerpt from our new 496-page book, Cooking Light Way to Cook

How to Make Dinner Rolls, Five Ways p. 224

Plus: Reader Recipes p. 242 Special Cookie Section p. 250
Chocolate Babka p. 262 Savory Vegetarian Entrées p. 266
5-Ingredient Dishes p. 274



how to Shape dough

Use one simple yeast dough to yield five light-as-a-feather dinner roll variations. Dust dough with poppy seeds for a prettier presentation.

BASIC ROLL
Divide the dough into 16 equal portions; shape each portion into a ball.

KNOT
Divide dough into 16 equal portions; roll each into an 8-inch rope. Tie each rope into a single knot; tuck the top end of the rope under the bottom edge of the roll.

SNAIL
Divide the dough into 16 equal portions; roll each into a 20-inch rope. Working on a flat surface, coil each rope in a spiral pattern.

Cooking Light *Dinner Rolls*

One dough recipe yields five roll variations. To freeze rolls, bake, cool completely, wrap in heavy-duty foil, and freeze. Thaw and reheat (still wrapped) at 350° for 12 minutes or until warm. Heat the milk in the microwave or on the stovetop; if it's too hot, let it cool to no warmer than 110° so your dough will rise nicely.

CLOVERLEAF

Divide dough into 16 equal portions; divide each portion into three balls. Working with three balls at a time, arrange the balls in a triangle pattern (be sure the balls are touching each other).

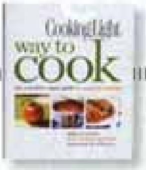
TWIST

Divide the dough into 16 equal portions; shape each portion into an 18-inch rope. Fold each rope in half so that both ends meet. Working with one folded rope at a time, hold the ends of the rope in one hand and the folded end in the other hand; gently twist.

2 teaspoons sugar
1 package dry yeast (about 2¼ teaspoons)
1 (12-ounce) can evaporated fat-free milk, warmed (100° to 110°)
18 ounces all-purpose flour (about 4 cups), divided
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon salt
Cooking spray
1 teaspoon cornmeal
2 tablespoons butter, melted and cooled
Poppy seeds (optional)

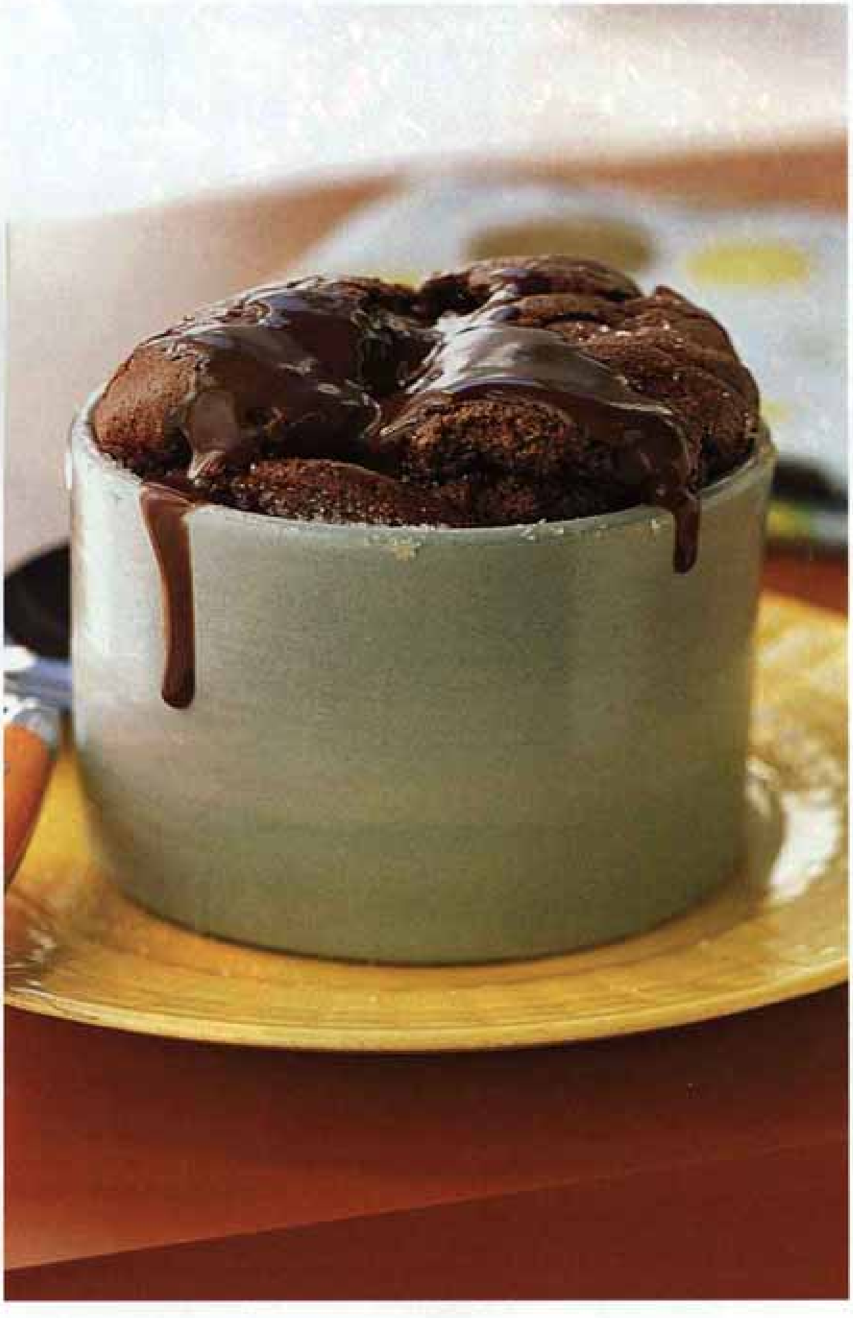
1. Dissolve sugar and yeast in milk in a large bowl; let stand 5 minutes.
2. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Add 13.5 ounces (about 3 cups) flour and egg to milk mixture, stirring until smooth; cover and let stand for 15 minutes.
3. Add 3.4 ounces (about ¾ cup) flour and salt; stir until a soft dough forms. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface. Knead until smooth and elastic (about 8 minutes); add enough of the remaining flour, 1 tablespoon at a time, to prevent dough from sticking to hands (dough will feel tacky).
4. Place the dough in a large bowl coated with cooking spray, turning to coat top. Cover and let rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, for 40 minutes or until doubled in size. (Press two fingers into the dough. If an indentation remains, the dough has risen enough.) Punch dough down; cover and let rest 5 minutes.
5. Divide dough into 16 equal portions. Working with one portion at a time (cover remaining dough to prevent drying), shape each portion into desired form (see pages 224 and 226). Place shaped dough portions on each of 2 baking sheets lightly sprinkled with ½ teaspoon cornmeal. Lightly coat shaped dough portions with cooking spray; cover with plastic wrap. Let rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, 20 minutes or until doubled in size.
6. Preheat oven to 400°.
7. Gently brush dough portions with butter; sprinkle with poppy seeds, if desired. Place 1 baking sheet on bottom oven rack and 1 baking sheet on middle oven rack. Bake at 400° for 10 minutes; rotate baking sheets. Bake an additional 10 minutes or until lightly browned on top and hollow-sounding when tapped on bottom. Place on wire racks. Serve warm, or cool completely on wire racks. Yield: 16 servings (serving size: 1 roll).

CALORIES 151; **FAT** 2.1g (sat 1.1g, mono 0.5g, poly 0.2g); **PROTEIN** 5.4g; **CARB** 27g; **FIBER** 0.9g; **CHOL** 18mg; **IRON** 1.7mg; **SODIUM** 187mg; **CALC** 69mg



how to Make a soufflé

This sweet or savory dish epitomizes the art of French cooking. But nothing is lost in translation with our fail-safe tips for a perfect, puffy soufflé.



1 **CHOOSE THE RIGHT DISHES**
Use soufflé dishes with tall, straight sides. Stand mixers with whisk attachments will incorporate the most air into the egg whites; use a flexible spatula to fold egg whites into the base.

2 **HELP IT CLIMB**
Lightly coat the soufflé dish with cooking spray. Add breadcrumbs or sugar, and tilt the dish until it's completely covered.

3 **PREPARE THE BASE**
The base gives the soufflé its defining flavor. After you cook and cool the base, add the egg yolks and flavorings, such as vanilla or fresh lemon juice, to enrich the dish.

4 WHIP THE EGG WHITES
Aim for stiff, satiny peaks, but be careful not to overbeat them. Egg whites have reached the stiff peak stage when they stand up. Overbeaten egg whites look dry and grainy.

5 GENTLY FOLD
Incorporate the egg whites into the base, being careful not to deflate the whites. Using a spatula, "cut" down the center and up the sides of the bowl, making an S motion and rotating the bowl as you go.

6 CHECK FOR DONENESS
The goal is a light, fluffy texture. The soufflé is done when it's puffed and set. To make sure it is completely cooked, insert a wooden pick or skewer horizontally into the side. If it comes out clean, the soufflé is ready.

Double Chocolate Soufflés with Warm Fudge Sauce

Prepare the ingredients ahead, spoon the batter into soufflé dishes, cover, and freeze until you're ready to bake them. They can go straight from the freezer to the oven. Make the sauce ahead, too, and simply warm it before serving this top-rated recipe.

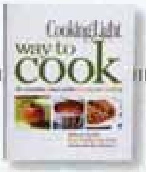
Soufflé:
Cooking spray
1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar, divided
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 1/4 cups fat-free milk
3 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 large egg yolk
6 large egg whites

Sauce:
1 tablespoon butter
1/3 cup sugar
2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1/2 cup fat-free milk
1/2 ounce bittersweet chocolate, chopped

1. Position oven rack to the lowest setting, and remove middle rack. Preheat oven to 425°.
2. To prepare the soufflés, lightly coat 6 (8-ounce) soufflé dishes with cooking spray. Sprinkle evenly with 2 tablespoons sugar. Set aside.
3. Combine remaining ½ cup sugar, 3 tablespoons flour, 3 tablespoons cocoa, and salt in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring with a whisk. Gradually add 1¼ cups milk, stirring with a whisk; bring to a boil. Cook 2 minutes or until thickened, stirring constantly with a whisk; remove from heat. Add 3 ounces

chocolate; stir until smooth. Transfer to a large bowl; cool to room temperature. Stir in vanilla and egg yolk.
4. Place egg whites in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at high speed until stiff peaks form. Gently fold one-fourth of egg whites into chocolate mixture; gently fold in remaining egg whites. Gently spoon mixture into prepared dishes. Sharply tap dishes 2 or 3 times on counter to level. Place dishes on a baking sheet; place baking sheet on the bottom rack of 425° oven. Immediately reduce oven temperature to 350° (do not remove soufflés from oven). Bake 40 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in the side of soufflé comes out clean.
5. To prepare sauce, melt butter in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Add ⅓ cup sugar, 2 tablespoons cocoa, and 1 tablespoon flour; stir well with a whisk. Gradually add ½ cup milk, stirring well with a whisk; bring to a boil. Cook 1 minute or until slightly thick, stirring constantly with a whisk. Remove from heat; add ½ ounce chocolate, stirring until smooth. Serve warm with soufflés.
Yield: 6 servings (serving size: 1 soufflé and about 2 tablespoons sauce).

CALORIES 315; **FAT** 9g (sat 5.1g, mono 1.8g, poly 0.3g); **PROTEIN** 9.1g; **CARB** 51.8g; **FIBER** 2.9g; **CHOL** 41mg; **IRON** 1.4mg; **SODIUM** 153mg; **CALC** 79mg



how to Stuff pork tenderloin or loin roast

Play with different cheeses, herbs, or fruits in the filling of this pretty dish. Whatever your choice, our steps help you make a guest-worthy entrée.

1 CUT THE PORK
Slice in half lengthwise, cutting to, but not all the way through, the other side. Open the halves, laying the meat flat. Starting from the center, cut each half lengthwise, cutting to, but not through, the other side. Open the halves, laying the meat flat.

2 POUND THE MEAT
Place between two sheets of plastic wrap, and pound it with a mallet to an even 1/2-inch thickness.

3 ARRANGE THE TWINE
Remove and discard plastic wrap. Slide segments of kitchen twine beneath the meat at 1- to 2-inch intervals.

4 ARRANGE THE FILLING
Spread it evenly on the meat, leaving a 1/2-inch border along edges.

5 ROLL IT UP
Start with a long end, and roll jelly-roll style, tucking the filling in as you go.

6 SECURE WITH TWINE
Bake at the recipe's specified temperature until a meat thermometer inserted into the center registers 155°. Let pork stand 10 minutes (the internal temperature will rise upon standing).

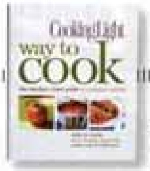
Fruit and Walnut–Stuffed Pork Loin

Dried fruits are rehydrated in a blend of orange-flavored liqueur and red wine. Use a combination of orange juice and chicken broth for a nonalcoholic alternative. The pork loin is coated in a breadcrumb mixture to form a crisp crust.

1/2 cup dry red wine
1/4 cup dried sour cherries
1/4 cup chopped dried apricots
1/4 cup chopped dried plums
2 tablespoons Triple Sec (orange-flavored liqueur)
1/3 cup finely chopped walnuts
2 tablespoons chopped shallots
1 1/4 teaspoons salt, divided
1/2 teaspoon grated lemon rind
2 (1-ounce) slices French bread
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 (2 1/2-pound) boneless center-cut pork loin roast, trimmed
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
Cooking spray
Parsley sprigs (optional)

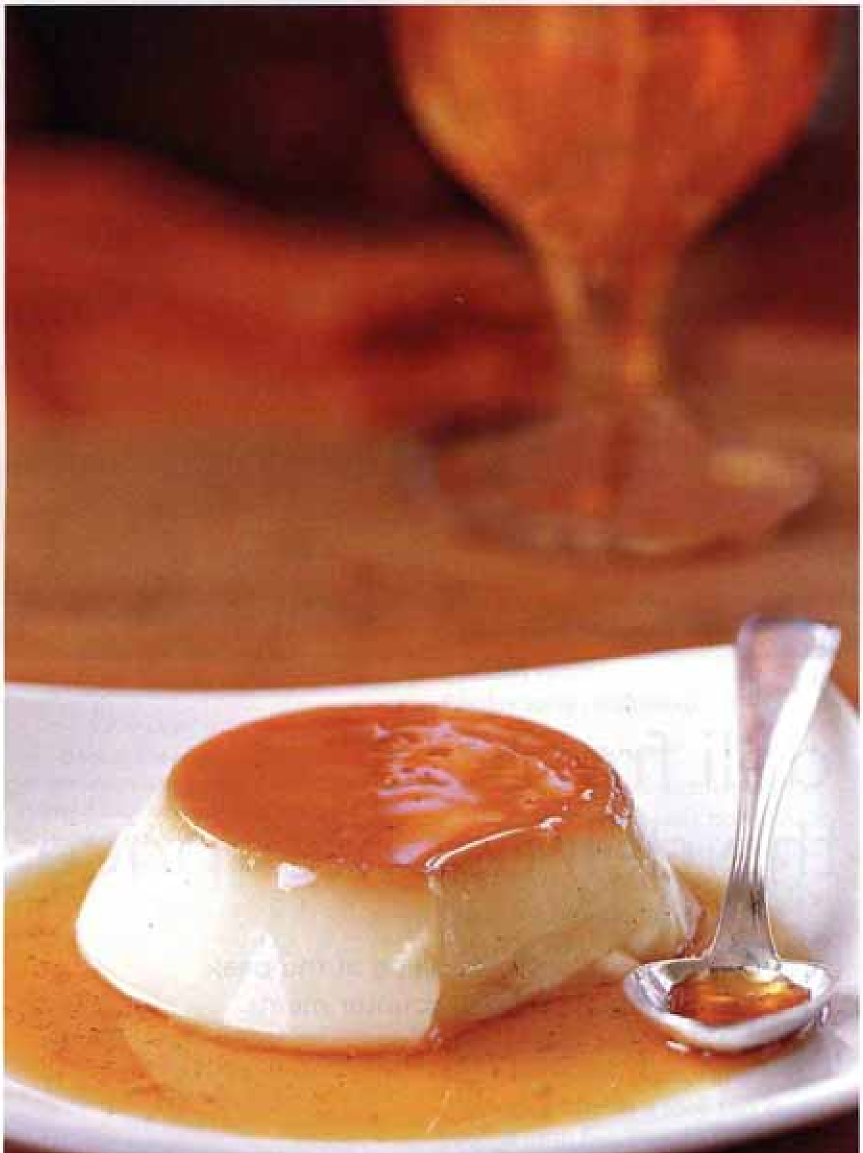
1. Preheat oven to 400°.
2. Combine first 5 ingredients in a medium microwave-safe bowl; microwave at HIGH 2 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes or until fruit is plump. Drain mixture through a sieve, reserving fruit mixture. Combine fruit mixture, walnuts, shallots, ¼ teaspoon salt, and rind.
3. Combine ¾ teaspoon salt, French bread, and next 3 ingredients (through garlic) in a food processor; process until fine crumbs form.
4. Cut pork in half lengthwise, cutting to, but not through, other side; open halves, laying the pork flat. Starting from center, cut each half lengthwise, cutting to, but not through, other side; open halves, laying pork flat. Cover with plastic wrap; pound to an even thickness. Discard plastic wrap. Spread fruit mixture over pork, leaving a ½-inch border. Roll up pork, jelly-roll fashion, starting with one long side. Secure with wooden picks or tie with twine. Sprinkle outside of pork evenly with remaining ¼ teaspoon salt; brush evenly with mustard. Sprinkle breadcrumb mixture over pork; press gently to adhere. Place pork on a broiler pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 400° for 55 minutes or until a meat thermometer inserted in the thickest part registers 155°. Let stand 10 minutes. Remove wooden picks or twine. Cut into 16 (½-inch-thick) slices. Garnish with parsley, if desired. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 2 slices).

CALORIES 323; **FAT** 12.4g (sat 3.7g, mono 4.5g, poly 3.1g); **PROTEIN** 29.7g; **CARB** 18.9g; **FIBER** 1.4g; **CHOL** 79mg; **IRON** 1.9mg; **SODIUM** 573mg; **CALC** 41mg



how to Make crème caramel

The custard in a crème caramel can take on countless flavor profiles, but the basic technique never varies. Master this classic with these steps.



1 COMBINE SUGAR AND WATER
Use a heavy saucepan; cook over medium-high heat until the sugar dissolves, stirring frequently.

2 COOK WITHOUT STIRRING
The mixture will start to caramelize and turn light brown. Continue to cook until it's a deep golden brown.

3 IMMEDIATELY POUR
Use just enough caramel to cover the bottom of a ramekin or custard cup coated with cooking spray.

4 TILT THE CUP
Cover the bottom completely with caramel. Repeat with the remaining cups.

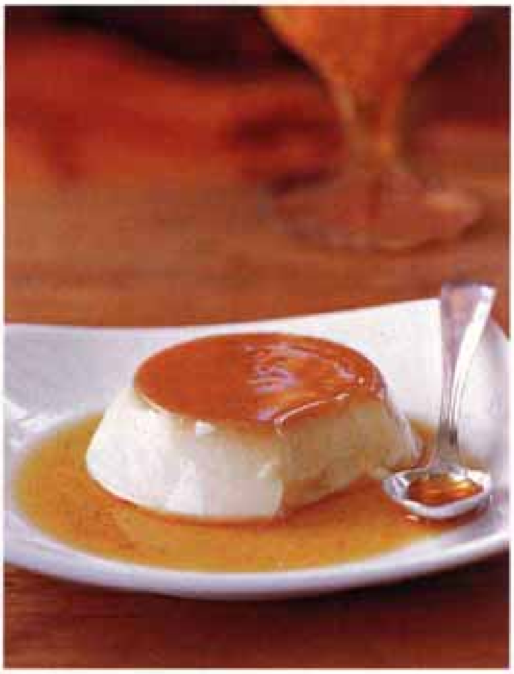
5 POUR THE CUSTARD
Fill each cup evenly with the custard mixture (eggs, milk, and flavorings).

6 BAKE AS DIRECTED
Cook until custards are just set. Remove custards from the oven; cool to room temperature. Place plastic wrap directly on surface of custards; chill overnight. After the custards have chilled, run a thin knife along the edge of each to loosen it from its cup.

7 TURN IT OUT
Place a dessert plate, upside down, on top of each cup. Invert the cup and plate. Lift the cup; the custard should slip out easily. Scrape out remaining syrup with a rubber spatula, and drizzle over custards.

Classic Crème Caramel

Nutty caramel coats delicate baked custard in this rich dessert, also referred to as "flan" in Spain. Although we specify cooking the caramel until golden, you can cook it longer for a deep amber color; the bitter notes of the darker caramel add a nice contrast to the sweet custard. The custards chill overnight, so they're a great make-ahead option for a dinner party. Baking at a low temperature means there's no need for a water bath. Since the seeds are not scraped from the vanilla bean, you can allow it to dry after steeping in the milk and reserve it for another use.



4 cups 2% reduced-fat milk
1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
Cooking spray
1⅔ cups sugar, divided
¼ cup water
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
6 large eggs
3 tablespoons heavy whipping cream

1. Preheat oven to 225°.

2. Heat milk and vanilla bean over medium-high heat in a medium, heavy saucepan to 180° or until tiny bubbles form around edge (do not boil); remove pan from heat. Cover and set aside.

3. Coat 10 (6-ounce) custard cups with cooking spray; arrange cups on a jelly-roll pan.

4. Combine 1 cup sugar and ¼ cup water in a small, heavy saucepan; cook sugar mixture over medium-high heat until sugar dissolves, stirring frequently. Continue cooking 7 minutes or until sugar mixture turns golden brown (do not stir). Immediately pour into prepared custard cups, tipping quickly until caramelized sugar coats bottom of cups.

5. Combine remaining ⅔ cup sugar, salt, and eggs in a large bowl, stirring with a whisk. Remove vanilla bean from milk mixture; reserve bean for another use. Gradually pour warm milk mixture into egg mixture, stirring constantly with a whisk; stir in cream. Strain egg mixture through a sieve into a large bowl; pour about ½ cup egg mixture over caramelized sugar in each custard cup. Bake at 225° for 2 hours or until custards are just set (the center barely moves when cup is touched). Remove from oven; cool to room temperature. Place plastic wrap on surface of custards, and chill overnight.

6. Carefully loosen edges of custards with a knife or rubber spatula. Place a dessert plate, upside down, on top of each cup; invert onto plate. Drizzle any remaining caramelized syrup over custards. Yield: 10 servings (serving size: 1 custard).

CALORIES 236; **FAT** 6.5g (sat 3.1g, mono 2.2g, poly 0.5g); **PROTEIN** 7.1g; **CARB** 38.4g; **FIBER** 0g; **CHOL** 140mg; **IRON** 0.6mg; **SODIUM** 139mg; **CALC** 138mg

READER RECIPES

Red Velvet Cupcakes

A TRIP TO LOS ANGELES yielded one of Nicolette Manescalchi's favorite food memories—a red velvet cupcake from one of the city's most famous bakeries, Sprinkles Cupcakes. She created a version with less fat and sugar that still delivers a moist and tender cake with a luscious, creamy icing.

"The frosting is just as important as the cake. My secret: use part real butter and cream cheese."

—Nicolette Manescalchi, San Francisco

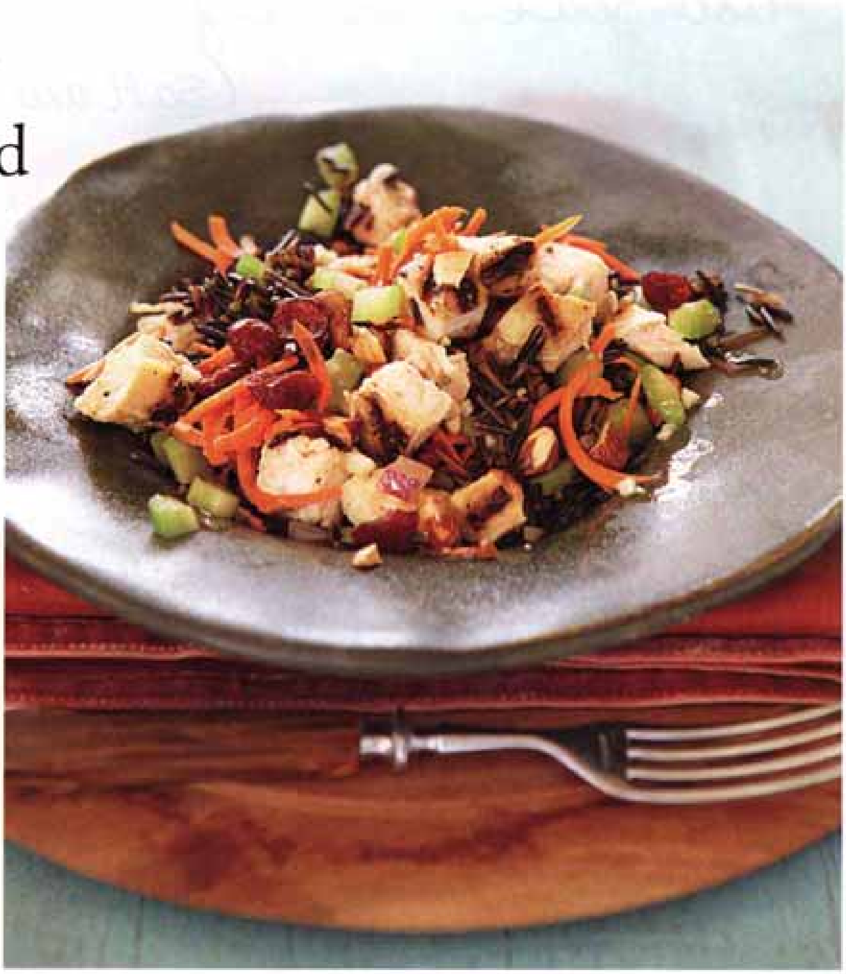
Cupcakes:
Cooking spray
10 ounces cake flour (about 2½ cups)
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1½ cups granulated sugar
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
2 large eggs
1¼ cups nonfat buttermilk
1½ teaspoons white vinegar
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
2 tablespoons red food coloring (about 1 ounce)
Frosting:
5 tablespoons butter, softened
4 teaspoons nonfat buttermilk
1 (8-ounce) block cream cheese, softened
3½ cups powdered sugar (about 1 pound)
1¼ teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. To prepare the cupcakes, place 30 paper muffin cup liners in muffin cups; coat with cooking spray.
3. Weigh or lightly spoon cake flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine cake flour, unsweetened cocoa, baking soda, baking powder, and salt in a medium bowl; stir with a whisk. Place granulated sugar and unsalted butter in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at medium speed until well blended (about 3 minutes). Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Add flour mixture and 1¼ cups nonfat buttermilk alternately to sugar mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture. Add white vinegar, 1½ teaspoons vanilla, and food coloring; beat well.
4. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 minutes on wire rack; remove from pan. Cool completely on wire racks.
5. To prepare frosting, beat 5 tablespoons butter, 4 teaspoons nonfat buttermilk, and cream cheese with a mixer at high speed until fluffy. Gradually add powdered sugar; beat until smooth. Add 1¼ teaspoons vanilla; beat well. Spread frosting evenly over cupcakes. Yield: 30 cupcakes (serving size: 1 cupcake).

CALORIES 205; **FAT** 7.3g (sat 4.5g, mono 2g, poly 0.3g); **PROTEIN** 2.3g; **CARB** 33.5g; **FIBER** 0.3g; **CHOL** 34mg; **IRON** 0.9mg; **SODIUM** 168mg; **CALC** 35mg

READER RECIPES

Chicken and Wild Rice Salad with Almonds



ASHLEY BONE PREFERS homemade salad dressings to commercial bottled varieties and experiments to create new recipes. For this chicken salad, she opted for a lighter oil-and-vinegar dressing instead of a mayonnaise-based one. She uses canola oil because it's mild and doesn't overpower the unique flavor of the fig vinegar. The dressing and dried cranberries add a hint of sweetness, and the toasted chopped almonds give the salad a little crunch.

"The fig vinegar makes this dressing spectacular and unique, but you can substitute white wine vinegar if you can't find it. I make this often because it is easy and keeps several days in the refrigerator."

—Ashley Bone, Spring Hill, Tenn.

Dressing:

- **1/4 cup fig vinegar or white wine vinegar**
- **2 teaspoons sugar**
- **1 teaspoon Dijon mustard**
- **1/4 teaspoon salt**
- **1 garlic clove, minced**
- **2 tablespoons canola oil**

Remaining ingredients:

- **2 cups fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth**
- **1 1/2 cups uncooked wild rice**
- **1 tablespoon butter**
- **Cooking spray**
- **1 pound skinless, boneless chicken breast**
- **1/4 teaspoon salt**
- **1/8 teaspoon black pepper**
- **1 cup chopped celery**
- **1/2 cup shredded carrots**
- **1/3 cup dried cranberries**
- **1/4 cup chopped almonds, toasted**
- **2 tablespoons minced red onion**

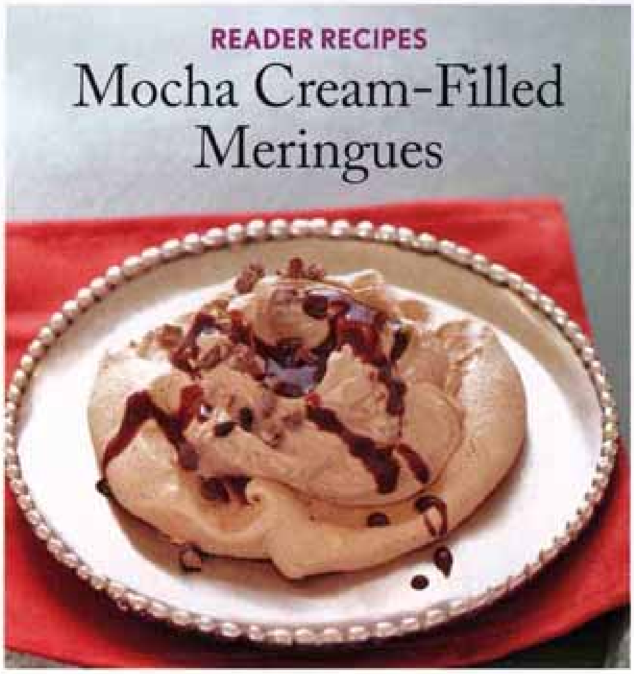
1. To prepare dressing, combine first 5 ingredients in a medium bowl. Gradually add oil, stirring with a whisk until well blended. Cover and chill.

2. Combine broth, rice, and butter in a medium saucepan; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 45 minutes or until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed. Remove rice mixture from heat; cool.

3. Heat a grill pan over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Sprinkle chicken with ¼ teaspoon salt and pepper. Add chicken to pan; cook 8 minutes on each side or until done. Cool; cut into ½-inch cubes.

4. Combine cooked rice, chicken, celery, carrots, cranberries, almonds, and red onion in a large bowl. Add dressing; toss gently to coat. Cover and chill. Yield: 6 servings (serving size: about 1⅓ cups).

CALORIES 352; **FAT** 10.3g (sat 2g, mono 5g, poly 2.5g); **PROTEIN** 25g; **CARB** 40.6g; **FIBER** 4g; **CHOL** 49mg; **IRON** 1.6mg; **SODIUM** 357mg; **CALC** 42mg



READER RECIPES

Mocha Cream-Filled Meringues

Patrice Hurd enjoys cooking for her husband of 31 years, Bob, but preparing desserts has been a challenge because he is diabetic. He splurges on special occasions or when they entertain. This is one of their favorite recipes. Hurd likes the make-ahead aspect of the meringues and the filling, which allows her to assemble the individual desserts a few minutes before serving them.

“I love the contrast of textures in a recipe. This dessert has the crispness of the meringue nests, the creamy smooth filling, and the crunch of the cacao nibs. Cacao nibs are pieces of raw cocoa beans and taste similar to roasted coffee beans.”

–Patrice Hurd, Bemidji, Minn.

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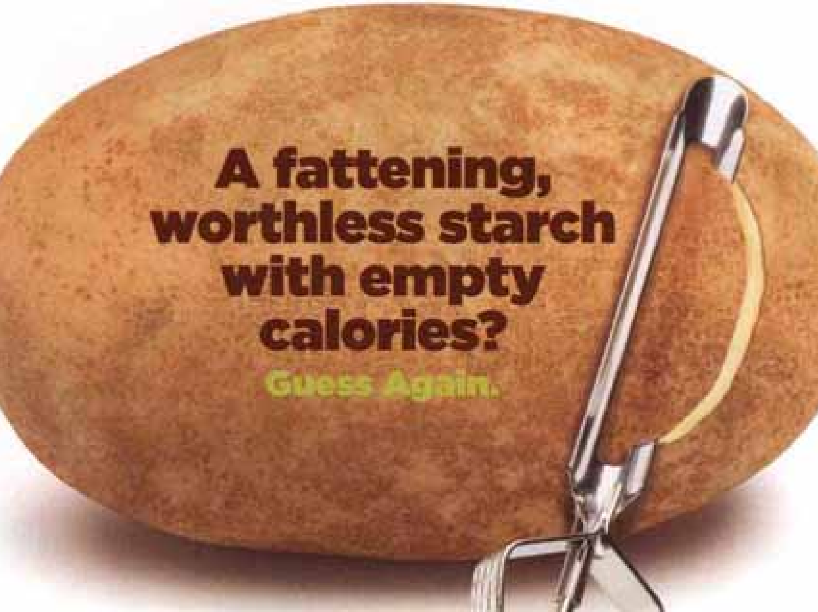


It's time to peel back the truth.

The Enlightened Cook

Meringues:

2 large egg whites
¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
Dash of salt
⅔ cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
½ teaspoon instant coffee granules
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ cup cacao nibs (such as Scharffen Berger)

Filling:

3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
3 tablespoons boiling water
½ teaspoon instant coffee granules
½ cup powdered sugar
½ cup (4 ounces) ⅓-less-fat cream cheese
1½ cups frozen reduced-calorie whipped topping, thawed
8 teaspoons chocolate syrup
2 teaspoons cacao nibs

1. Preheat oven to 300°.

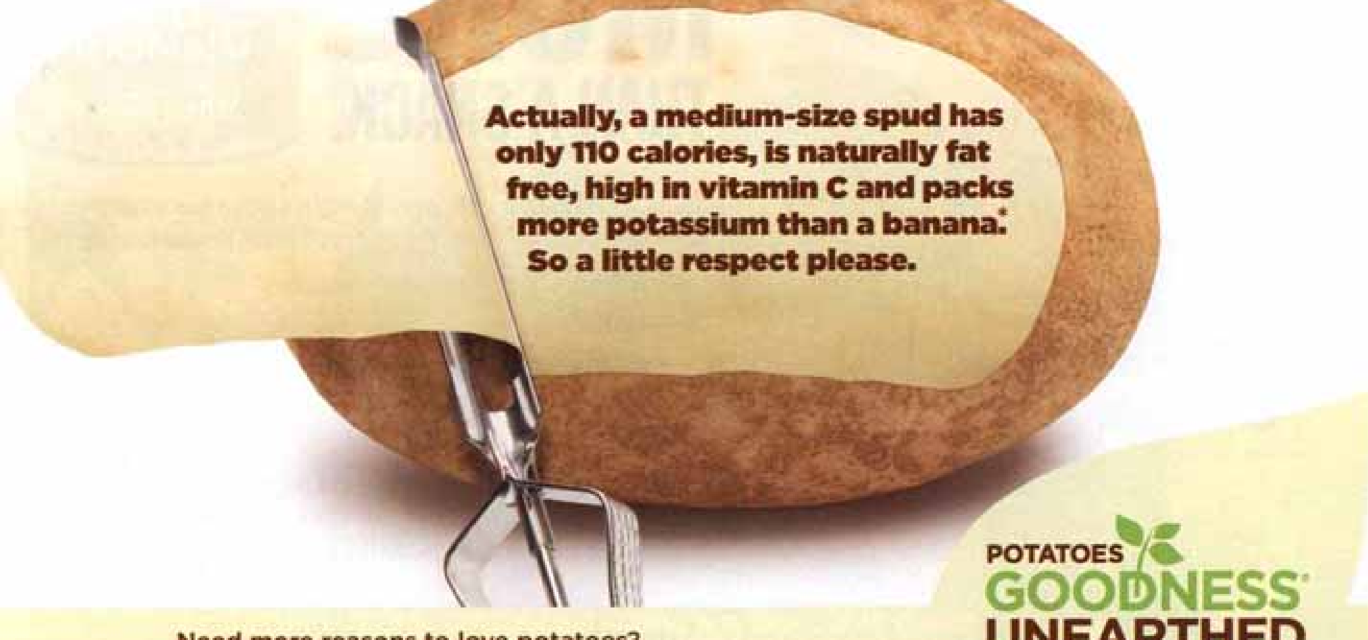
2. To prepare meringues, cover a baking sheet with parchment paper. Draw 8 (4-inch) circles on paper. Turn paper over; secure with masking tape.

3. Combine egg whites and cream of tartar in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at high speed until soft peaks form. Add salt. Gradually add granulated sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating until stiff peaks form. Add 2 tablespoons cocoa, ½ teaspoon coffee, and vanilla; beat well. Fold in ¼ cup cacao nibs. Divide batter evenly among 8 circles on prepared baking sheet; spread to fill circles using the back of a spoon.

4. Bake at 300° for 35 minutes. Turn oven off; cool meringues in closed oven 1 hour. Carefully remove meringues from paper. Cool completely on a wire rack. (Store in an airtight container for up to a week).

5. To prepare filling, combine 3 tablespoons cocoa, 3 tablespoons boiling water, and ½ teaspoon coffee granules in a small bowl, stirring with a whisk until smooth. Cool. Combine powdered sugar and cream cheese in a medium bowl; beat with a mixer until smooth. Add cocoa mixture; beat well. Fold in whipped topping. Spoon ¼ cup filling into center of each meringue; drizzle 1 teaspoon chocolate syrup over each filled meringue. Sprinkle ¼ teaspoon cacao nibs over each serving. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1 filled meringue).

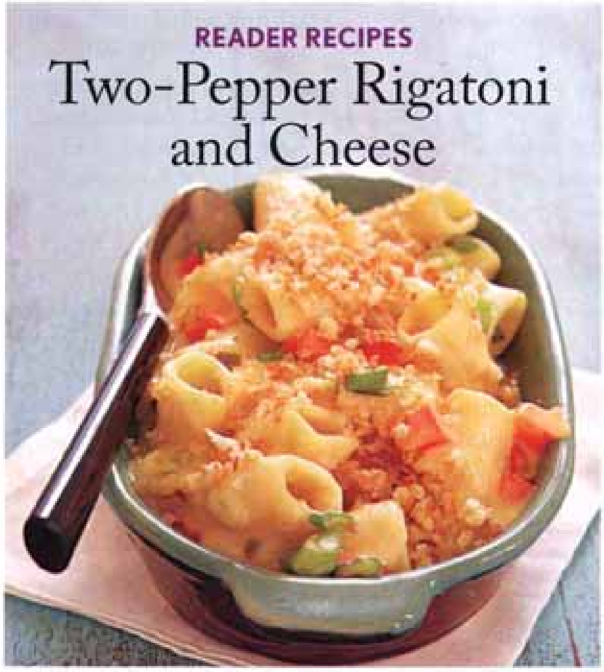
CALORIES 233; **FAT** 8.3g (sat 5.9g, mono 1g, poly 0.1g); **PROTEIN** 3.8g; **CARB** 38.4g; **FIBER** 1.2g; **CHOL** 10mg; **IRON** 1.9mg; **SODIUM** 107mg; **CALC** 28mg



Need more reasons to love potatoes?
Peel back the truth about this budget-friendly, naturally fat-free food and dig up simple, 10-minute microwave recipes at **potatogoodness.com**

*Potato with skin.

The Enlightened Cook



DONNA AND JEFF TOWLE are avid cooks and have spent many hours together in their kitchen preparing family meals, hosting cooking classes for their friends, and catering on the weekends. But their approach to cooking took a healthier turn after both realized their love of food caused them to tip the scales. Thanks in part to lightened recipes like this grown-up mac and cheese, their efforts have been successful—over the past year, Jeff has lost 50 pounds and Donna almost 40.

> "This is a great basic recipe because there are many possibilities for variations with different pastas and cheeses. You can also use individual gratin dishes if you want a special presentation."
>
> —*Jeff Towle, Kingwood, Texas*

MORE THAN A SNACK.®

You're doing **MORE** these days, so why not pick a snack that gives you **MORE**? Ounce for ounce Blue Diamond® Whole Natural Almonds have

- **MORE** iron than spinach
- **MORE** fiber than any other nut
- **MORE** potassium than bananas
- Zero Cholesterol
- 13 essential nutrients in all

Preliminary evidence suggests that just a handful a day may help you to eat less at mealtime! Blue Diamond® Whole Natural Almonds, a delicious and satisfying way to make the **MOST** of your busy life.

Smart Eating!®

Scientific evidence suggests, but does not prove, that eating 1.5 ounces per day of most nuts, such as almonds, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease. See nutrition information for fat content.

FOR COMPLETE NUTRITIONAL DATA REFER TO: USDA NATIONAL NUTRIENT DATABASE FOR STANDARD REFERENCE, RELEASE 19, 2006

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5 cups uncooked rigatoni (16 ounces uncooked pasta)
2 tablespoons butter, divided
1 cup chopped red bell pepper
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
3 cups fat-free milk
1 cup (4 ounces) shredded fontina cheese
1 cup (4 ounces) shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1 tablespoon finely chopped pickled jalapeño pepper
¾ teaspoon salt
½ cup sliced green onions
Cooking spray
2 (1-ounce) slices white bread

1. Preheat oven to 375°.
2. Cook pasta according to package directions, omitting salt and fat. Drain well; place in a large bowl.
3. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add bell pepper; sauté 5 minutes or until tender. Add to pasta.
4. Add flour to pan. Gradually add milk, stirring with a whisk until smooth. Bring to a boil; cook 2 minutes or until thickened, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Add cheeses, stirring until cheeses melt and mixture is smooth. Stir in jalapeño and salt. Add cheese mixture to pasta, tossing well to coat. Stir in green onions. Spoon pasta mixture into a 13 x 9–inch baking dish coated with cooking spray.
5. Place bread slices in a food processor; pulse 10 times or until coarse crumbs measure about 1 cup. Melt remaining 1 tablespoon butter. Combine butter and breadcrumbs in a small bowl; toss until blended. Sprinkle breadcrumb mixture over pasta mixture. Bake at 375° for 15 minutes or until browned. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1 cup).

CALORIES 408; **FAT** 12.8g (sat 7.8g, mono 3.3g, poly 0.6g); **PROTEIN** 19.2g; **CARB** 54.5g; **FIBER** 2.4g; **CHOL** 40mg; **IRON** 2.5mg; **SODIUM** 550mg; **CALC** 293mg

—Story by Cassandra Blohowiak

WINE NOTE Portuguese reds are ripping hot right now and Esporao is one of my favorite producers. Gorgeous on the nose with strawberries and pansies, the 2006 Esporao Reserva Red ($15) has a creamy character that will meld very well with this cheesy dish. Its jammy fruit will prevent it from clashing with the jalapeños, a concern when there is heat in a recipe. **—Gary Vaynerchuk**

HOLIDAY BAKING

Our prettiest holiday cookies

There's no such thing as too many cookie options in December. Here, four recipes that are delicious and beautiful, for home or giving.

BY JULIANNA GRIMES AND ANN TAYLOR PITTMAN

CREATE FLAVOR AND SPARKLE

1 BROWN THE BUTTER
Enrich the flavor of the cookies by cooking the butter.

2 MAKE THEM SHINE
Coarse sugar adds a festive touch. Hold the cookies over a bowl as you sprinkle, so you don't lose any crystals that fall off.

SEASON'S BEST COOKIES
Sign up for our 31-day Cookie Calendar. **CookingLight.com/features**

Iced Browned Butter Sugar Cookies

With nutty, caramel notes from browned butter and a fair bit of salt to balance the flavors, these cookies will become an instant favorite. You can roll out the dough right after combining all the ingredients—no chilling required. Look for pearlized sugar in gourmet markets or craft stores; the coarse crystals reflect light to give the cookies a sparkly, jewel-like appearance.

9 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 cup granulated sugar
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
3 large egg yolks
8 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1¾ cups)
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon baking powder
1 cup powdered sugar
1½ tablespoons half-and-half
¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
⅓ cup pearlized sugar or turbinado sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium-low heat; cook 6 minutes or until dark brown. Pour butter into a large bowl; let stand 5 minutes. Add granulated sugar and ½ teaspoon vanilla; beat with a mixer at medium speed until well blended (about 2 minutes). Add egg yolks, and beat at medium speed until well blended (about 1 minute).
3. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine flour, salt, and baking powder; stir with a whisk. Add flour mixture to butter mixture; beat at low speed just until combined. Turn dough out onto a sheet of wax paper; knead gently 7 times. Roll dough to a ¼-inch thickness. Cut with a 2½-inch star-shaped cookie cutter into 32 cookies; reroll scraps as necessary. Arrange cookies 1 inch apart on baking sheets lined with parchment paper. Bake, 1 batch at a time, at 350° for 10 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool cookies completely on wire racks.
4. Combine powdered sugar, half-and-half, and ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract, stirring with a whisk until icing is smooth. Spoon about ¾ teaspoon icing onto each cookie; spread to edges. While icing is wet, sprinkle each cookie with ½ teaspoon pearlized sugar. Dry on wire racks. Yield: 32 cookies (serving size: 1 cookie).

CALORIES 104; **FAT** 3.8g (sat 2.2g, mono 1g, poly 0.2g); **PROTEIN** 1g; **CARB** 17g; **FIBER** 0.2g; **CHOL** 28mg; **IRON** 0.4mg; **SODIUM** 42mg; **CALC** 7mg

MAKE PERFECT PINWHEELS

1 STACK THE DOUGH
Leave a 1/2-inch border along one of the long edges as you work.

2 ROLL IT UP
Start with the side with no border; roll up dough jelly-roll style.

3 FREEZE AND SLICE
Place dough in the freezer to chill it quickly. Then slice into thin rounds, working quickly.

GINGER-LEMON PINWHEEL COOKIES

Ginger dough:

1/4 cup unsalted butter, softened
1/3 cup packed dark brown sugar
1/4 cup molasses
1 large egg yolk
6 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1 1/3 cups)
3/4 teaspoon ground ginger
3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
Dash of ground allspice

Lemon dough:

5 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
2/3 cup granulated sugar
1 large egg white
2 teaspoons grated lemon rind
3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
6 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1 1/3 cups)
1/4 teaspoon salt

1. To prepare ginger dough, place 1/4 cup butter and brown sugar in a medium bowl; beat with a mixer at medium speed until well combined (about 3 minutes). Add molasses and egg yolk; beat until well blended. Weigh or lightly spoon 6 ounces (about 1 1/3 cups) flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine 6 ounces flour, ginger, and next 4 ingredients (through allspice); stir with a whisk. Add flour mixture to butter mixture; beat at low speed just until combined. Wrap dough in plastic wrap; chill 30 minutes.

2. To prepare lemon dough, place 5 tablespoons butter and granulated sugar in a medium bowl; beat with a mixer at medium speed until blended (about 3 minutes). Add egg white; beat until blended. Beat in rind and vanilla. Weigh or lightly spoon 6 ounces (about 1 1/3 cups) flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine 6 ounces flour and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Add flour mixture to butter mixture; beat at low speed just until combined. Wrap dough in plastic wrap; chill 30 minutes.

3. Unwrap ginger dough. Roll ginger dough between sheets of plastic wrap into a 13 x 8 1/2–inch rectangle (3/16 inch thick); chill 10 minutes. Unwrap lemon dough. Roll lemon dough between sheets of plastic wrap into a 13 x 9–inch rectangle (3/16 inch thick); chill 10 minutes. Carefully stack ginger dough on top of lemon dough, leaving a 1/2-inch border along one long edge. Starting with the long side without a border, roll up dough, jelly-roll fashion. Seal edges (do not seal ends of roll). Cover with plastic wrap; freeze 30 minutes.

4. Preheat oven to 350°.

5. Unwrap dough. Cut with a sharp knife into 40 slices (about 1/4 inch thick). Reshape rounds, if necessary. Arrange slices 1 inch apart on baking sheets lined with parchment paper. Bake, 1 batch at a time, at 350° for 8 to 9 minutes or until set and lightly browned. Cool on wire racks. Yield: 40 cookies (serving size: 1 cookie).

CALORIES 81; **FAT** 2.8g (sat 1.7g, mono 0.7g, poly 0.2g); **PROTEIN** 1.1g; **CARB** 13.1g; **FIBER** 0.3g; **CHOL** 12mg; **IRON** 0.6mg; **SODIUM** 33mg; **CALC** 9mg

CONSTRUCT WINDOWPANES

1 **USE GRADUATED CUTTERS** We like fluted rectangular cutters, but round or star-shaped cutters work just as well.

2 **TOP SOLID COOKIES** Raspberry preserves add color.

3 **DUST WINDOW PIECES** Powdered sugar gives the cut-out cookies a snowy holiday glow.

Raspberry Linzer Cookies

Ground almonds give these cookies a hearty taste and extra crunch. We love the look and texture of raspberry preserves with seeds, but use seedless fruit spread if you like.

7.5 ounces all-purpose flour (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups plus 2 tablespoons), divided
1 cup whole blanched almonds
$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking powder
$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
$\frac{2}{3}$ cup granulated sugar
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter, softened
$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon grated lemon rind
4 large egg yolks
6 tablespoons raspberry preserves with seeds
2 teaspoons powdered sugar

1. Weigh or lightly spoon 2.25 ounces (about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup) flour into a dry measuring cup; level with a knife. Combine 2.25 ounces flour and almonds in a food processor; process until finely ground. Weigh or lightly spoon remaining 5.25 ounces (about 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) flour into a dry measuring cup. Combine almond mixture, remaining 5.25 ounces flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt, stirring well with a whisk.
2. Place granulated sugar, butter, and rind in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at medium speed until light and fluffy (about 3 minutes). Add egg yolks; beat until well blended. Beating at low speed, gradually add flour mixture; beat just until a soft dough forms. Turn dough out onto a sheet of plastic wrap; knead lightly 3 times or until smooth. Divide dough into 2 equal portions; wrap each portion in plastic wrap. Chill 1 hour.
3. Preheat oven to 350°.
4. Roll each dough portion into a $\frac{1}{8}$-inch thickness on a floured surface; cut with a 2-inch rectangular cookie cutter with fluted edges to form 36 cookies. Repeat procedure with remaining dough portion; use a 1-inch rectangular fluted cutter to remove centers of 36 rectangles. Arrange 1 inch apart on baking sheets lined with parchment paper. Bake, 1 batch at a time, at 350° for 10 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool on pans 5 minutes. Remove from pans; cool on wire racks.
5. Spread center of each whole cookie with about $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon preserves. Sprinkle cutout cookies with powdered sugar. Place 1 cutout cookie on top of each whole cookie. Yield: 36 cookies (serving size: 1 cookie).

CALORIES 96; **FAT** 5.1g (sat 1.9g, mono 2.2g, poly 0.7g); **PROTEIN** 1.8g; **CARB** 11.4g; **FIBER** 0.6g; **CHOL** 29mg; **IRON** 0.5mg; **SODIUM** 25mg; **CALC** 18mg

FORM THUMBPRINT COOKIES

1 ROLL DOUGH INTO BALLS
Then roll nuts into sides, leaving tops and bottoms uncovered.

2 MAKE AN INDENTATION
Press thumb into each dough ball to create a small well.

3 COOL AND FILL
Spoon hazelnut-chocolate spread into each cookie. Drag a toothpick through the spread to make a swirl.

Chocolate-Hazelnut Thumbprints

With a double shot of chocolate and hazelnut flavors, kids and adults will rave over these filled cookies. The espresso powder is optional, but it intensifies the chocolate flavor.

4.5 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1 cup)
1 cup powdered sugar
1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup butter, softened
2 large egg yolks
1 teaspoon instant espresso (optional)
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
2/3 cup finely chopped hazelnuts, toasted
1/3 cup hazelnut-chocolate spread (such as Nutella)

1. Preheat oven to 350°.

2. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into a dry measuring cup; level with a knife. Combine flour, sugar, cocoa, and salt; stir with a whisk. Place butter in a large bowl, and beat with a mixer at medium speed until light and fluffy (about 2 minutes). Stir egg yolks with a whisk, adding espresso, if desired. Add the yolk mixture and vanilla to butter; beat well. Add flour mixture to butter mixture; beat at low speed just until combined.

3. Turn dough out onto a sheet of wax paper; knead 6 times or until smooth and shiny. Shape dough into 28 (1-inch) balls. Roll sides of balls in nuts, pressing gently. Arrange balls 1 inch apart on baking sheets lined with parchment paper. Press thumb into center of each cookie, leaving an indentation. Bake, 1 batch at a time, at 350° for 10 minutes. Remove cookies from pans; cool completely on wire racks. Spoon a scant ½ teaspoon hazelnut-chocolate spread into center of each cookie. Yield: 28 cookies (serving size: 1 cookie).

CALORIES 104; **FAT** 6.5g (sat 2.7g, mono 2.3g, poly 0.4g); **PROTEIN** 1.6g; **CARB** 10.9g; **FIBER** 0.8g; **CHOL** 23mg; **IRON** 0.6mg; **SODIUM** 46mg; **CALC** 11mg

SPECIAL OCCASION RECIPE

Chocolate Babka

Sweet dough envelops a chocolaty filling in a bread you'll swoon over.

THIS SWEET YEAST CAKE—in the style of French *baba au rhum*, Italian panettone, and Austrian *kugelhopf*—is a Hanukkah favorite. We adore it warm from the oven with coffee, and often make it when we have company. A fresh loaf is also a welcome gift. To get a jump start on the baking, roll out dough, fill, shape, and refrigerate overnight in pan. It will rise to the top of the pan in the refrigerator, and then the next morning you can let it come to room temperature, top with streusel, and bake as directed. *Recipe on page 264*

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The Enlightened Cook

Dough:

1 teaspoon granulated sugar
1 package dry yeast (about 2¼ teaspoons)
¾ cup warm 1% low-fat milk (105° to 110°)
6 tablespoons granulated sugar
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon salt
1 large egg yolk, lightly beaten
7.5 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1⅔ cups), divided
5.85 ounces bread flour (about 1¼ cups)
5 tablespoons butter, cut into pieces and softened
Cooking spray

Filling:

½ cup granulated sugar
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon salt
4 ounces semisweet chocolate, finely chopped

Streusel:

2 tablespoons powdered sugar
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon butter, softened

1. Dissolve 1 teaspoon granulated sugar and yeast in warm milk in the bowl of a stand mixer; let stand 5 minutes. Stir in 6 tablespoons granulated sugar, vanilla extract, ¼ teaspoon salt, and egg yolk. Weigh or lightly spoon flours into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Add 6 ounces (about 1⅓ cups) all-purpose flour and bread flour to milk mixture; beat with dough hook attachment at medium speed until well blended (about 2 minutes). Add 5 tablespoons butter, beating until well blended. Scrape dough out onto a floured surface (dough will be very sticky). Knead until smooth and elastic (about 10 minutes); add 1.5 ounces (about ⅓ cup) all-purpose flour, 1 tablespoon at a time, to

prevent dough from sticking to hands (dough will be very soft).

2. Place dough in a large bowl coated with cooking spray, turning to coat top. Cover and let rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, 1½ hours or until doubled in size. (Gently press two fingers into dough. If indentation remains, dough has risen enough.) Punch dough down; cover and let dough rest 5 minutes.

3. Line the bottom of a 9 x 5–inch loaf pan with parchment paper; coat sides of pan with cooking spray.

4. To prepare filling, combine ½ cup granulated sugar, cocoa, cinnamon, salt, and chocolate in a medium bowl; set aside.

5. Place dough on a generously floured surface; roll dough out into a 16-inch square. Sprinkle filling over dough, leaving a ¼-inch border around edges. Roll up dough tightly, jelly-roll fashion; pinch seam and ends to seal. Holding dough by ends, twist dough 4 times as if wringing out a towel. Fit dough into prepared pan. Cover and let rise 45 minutes or until doubled in size.

6. Preheat oven to 350°.

7. To prepare streusel, combine powdered sugar, 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour, and 1 tablespoon softened butter, stirring with a fork until mixture is crumbly; sprinkle streusel evenly over dough. Bake at 350° for 40 minutes or until loaf is browned on bottom and sounds hollow when tapped. Cool bread in pan 10 minutes on a wire rack; remove from pan. Cool bread completely on wire rack before slicing. Yield: 16 servings (serving size: 1 slice).

CALORIES 220; **FAT** 7.1g (sat 4.3g, mono 2g, poly 0.5g); **PROTEIN** 4.1g; **CARB** 36g; **FIBER** 1.5g; **CHOL** 25mg; **IRON** 1.4mg; **SODIUM** 111mg; **CALC** 23mg

—Recipe by Maureen Callahan

- KITCHEN TECHNIQUE -

How to shape a perfectly gorgeous babka

1 FILL THE DOUGH
Roll it into a square, then sprinkle with the filling almost to the outside edge. It's OK if some of the filling leaks out as you shape the bread; that'll make it prettier.

2 SHAPE THE DOUGH
Twist 4 times as if wringing out a towel, but with a lighter touch. This creates an interior spiral that distributes the chocolate filling in a beautiful way.

3 FIT THE DOUGH ROLL
Place it into the prepared pan; it may be a tight squeeze, but rest assured that any lumps or bumps will create interest once baked. Sprinkle with buttery streusel for added texture.

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EVERYDAY VEGETARIAN

Savoring umami

Discover four dishes that showcase umami—the fifth taste sensation beyond sweet, sour, salty, and bitter.

RECIPES BY IVY MANNING

Vegetarian Bolognese with Whole-Wheat Penne

The Parmigiano-Reggiano rind simmers with the sauce, infusing it with deep, savory umami taste.

1/4 cup dried porcini mushrooms (about 1/4 ounce)
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 1/2 cups finely chopped onion
1/2 cup finely chopped carrot
1/2 cup finely chopped celery
1 (8-ounce) package cremini mushrooms, finely chopped
1/2 cup dry red wine
1/4 cup warm water
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 (28-ounce) can organic crushed tomatoes with basil, undrained
1 (2-inch) piece Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese rind
12 ounces uncooked whole-wheat penne (tube-shaped pasta)
1/2 cup (2 ounces) shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

1. Place dried mushrooms in a spice or coffee grinder; process until finely ground.
2. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onion, carrot, celery, and mushrooms; sauté 10 minutes. Add wine; simmer 2 minutes or until liquid almost evaporates. Add 1/4 cup warm water and next 4 ingredients (through cheese rind) to onion mixture. Stir in ground porcini. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 40 minutes. Keep warm. Remove rind; discard.
3. Cook pasta according to package directions, omitting salt and fat. Place 1 cup of pasta in each of 6 bowls. Top each portion with 3/4 cup sauce and about 1 tablespoon cheese. Yield: 6 servings.

CALORIES 334; **FAT** 7.2g (sat 2.1g, mono 2.5g, poly 1.9g); **PROTEIN** 14.8g; **CARB** 57.7g; **FIBER** 9.7g; **CHOL** 9mg; **IRON** 3.3mg; **SODIUM** 542mg; **CALC** 156mg

Corn and Chile Quesadillas

Corn, shiitakes, and aged cheese bring meaty umami flavor to this dish. If you can't find fresh Anaheim chiles, substitute about 1/4 cup chopped canned green chiles. Sharp cheddar or aged Gruyère cheese could also stand in for the Gouda, if you prefer.

2 Anaheim chiles (about 1/2 pound)
2 teaspoons olive oil
1 cup thinly sliced shiitake mushroom caps (about 1 1/4 ounces)
1 cup frozen whole-kernel corn, thawed
1/4 cup chopped green onions
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
4 (8-inch) flour tortillas
1 cup (4 ounces) shredded aged Gouda cheese
Cooking spray
1/2 cup bottled salsa

1. Preheat broiler.
2. Cut chiles in half lengthwise; discard seeds and membranes. Place chile halves, skin sides up, on a foil-lined baking sheet; flatten with hand. Broil 8 minutes or until blackened. Place in a zip-top plastic bag; seal. Let stand 15 minutes. Peel and chop. Reduce oven temperature to 200°.
3. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms; sauté 2 minutes. Add corn, onions, salt, and pepper; sauté 2 minutes. Place mixture in a bowl; stir in chopped chiles. Wipe pan clean.
4. Place about 1/4 cup mushroom mixture and 1/4 cup cheese over half of 1 tortilla. Repeat procedure with remaining 1 1/4 cups mushroom mixture, remaining 3/4 cup cheese, and remaining 3 tortillas. Heat pan over medium heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Place 1 tortilla in pan; cook 2 minutes or until cheese melts and bottom is golden. Fold tortilla in half; place on a baking sheet. Place in 200° oven to keep warm. Repeat procedure with remaining tortillas. Cut each quesadilla into wedges; serve with salsa. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 1 quesadilla and 2 tablespoons salsa).

CALORIES 341; **FAT** 15.1g (sat 6.7g, mono 6.1g, poly 1.5g); **PROTEIN** 13.6g; **CARB** 39.5g; **FIBER** 4.4g; **CHOL** 25mg; **IRON** 2.7mg; **SODIUM** 738mg; **CALC** 293mg

Wild Mushroom and Lentil Cottage Pie

Yukon gold potatoes, mushrooms, soy sauce, and tomato paste boost umami taste in this hearty winter entrée. If time is a concern, use store-bought, refrigerated mashed potatoes for the topping. A light drizzle of white truffle oil over the finished dish provides an irresistible aroma.

Topping:

1½ pounds cubed peeled Yukon gold potato
1½ teaspoons salt, divided
⅔ cup low-fat buttermilk
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
Dash of ground red pepper

Filling:

1 cup dried petite green lentils
4 cups water
½ teaspoon salt
1 bay leaf
2½ cups organic vegetable broth, divided
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon olive oil
1½ cups finely chopped onion
1 cup finely chopped carrot
½ cup thinly sliced celery
4 (4-ounce) packages presliced exotic mushroom blend (such as shiitake, cremini, and oyster)
2 tablespoons dry sherry
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
1 tablespoon white truffle oil
Chopped chives (optional)

Looking for a golden way to stretch your food dollars?

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The Enlightened Cook

COTTAGE PIE IS A TRADITIONAL BRITISH DISH MADE WITH BEEF. UMAMI ELEMENTS MAKE OUR VEGGIE VERSION SATISFYING.

EXPLAINING UMAMI

Learn more about the fifth taste sensation on our blog. **CookingLight.com/features**

1. To prepare topping, place potato and 1 teaspoon salt in a medium saucepan; cover with water. Bring to a boil. Cook 20 minutes or until very tender; drain. Return potato to pan. Add buttermilk, ½ teaspoon salt, black pepper, nutmeg, and red pepper to potato; mash with a potato masher until smooth. Set aside.

2. Preheat oven to 375°.

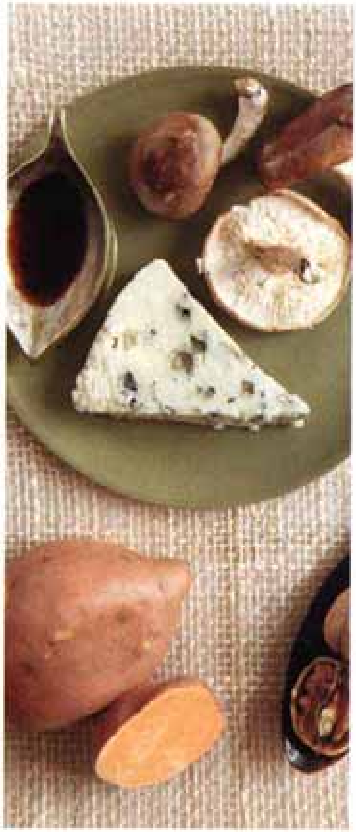
3. To prepare filling, combine lentils, 4 cups water, ½ teaspoon salt, and bay leaf in a saucepan; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer for 25 minutes or until lentils are tender. Drain, and set aside.

4. Combine ½ cup vegetable broth and flour in a small bowl, stirring with a whisk until well blended. Set flour mixture aside.

5. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion, carrot, celery, and mushrooms; cook for 7 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in remaining 2 cups broth. Add sherry, soy sauce, tomato paste, thyme, and lentils to mushroom mixture. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Stir in flour mixture, and cook until mixture thickens (about 2 minutes), stirring constantly with a whisk.

6. Spoon lentil mixture into a 2-quart casserole; top with potato mixture, spreading evenly. Bake at 375° for 25 minutes or until potatoes are golden. Drizzle truffle oil over potatoes. Garnish with chopped chives, if desired. Yield: 8 servings.

CALORIES 235; **FAT** 4.3g (sat 0.6g, mono 2.6g, poly 0.4g); **PROTEIN** 9.8g; **CARB** 39.7g; **FIBER** 5.8g; **CHOL** 1mg; **IRON** 2.6mg; **SODIUM** 734mg; **CALC** 54mg



Seitan Stir-Fry with Black Bean Garlic Sauce

Look for seitan—also called wheat gluten—in Asian markets or the refrigerated sections of health food or specialty stores. Black bean garlic sauce is sold in the international section of some supermarkets and at Asian markets.

2 cups boiling water
1 ounce dried shiitake mushrooms
2 tablespoons Chinese rice wine or sake
2 tablespoons black bean garlic sauce (such as Lee Kum Kee)
2 teaspoons cornstarch
2 tablespoons canola oil, divided
2 cups thinly sliced drained seitan (about 8 ounces)
1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic
1 tablespoon finely chopped peeled fresh ginger
4 cups (2-inch) cut green beans (about 1 pound)
2 cups hot cooked brown rice
1/4 teaspoon salt
Cilantro sprigs (optional)

1. Combine 2 cups boiling water and mushrooms in a small bowl; cover and let stand for 20 minutes. Drain in a colander over a bowl, reserving ½ cup soaking liquid. Rinse mushrooms; drain well. Discard mushroom stems; thinly slice mushroom caps.

2. Combine reserved liquid, rice wine, black bean sauce, and cornstarch in a small bowl; stir with a whisk, and set mixture aside.

3. Heat 1 tablespoon canola oil in a large nonstick skillet or wok over medium-high heat. Add seitan to pan, and stir-fry 2 minutes or until lightly browned. Place seitan in a medium bowl. Heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil in pan over medium-high heat. Add garlic and ginger to pan; stir-fry for 30 seconds. Add mushrooms and beans; cover and cook 3 minutes. Add black bean sauce mixture to pan; cook 1 minute or until sauce slightly thickens. Add seitan to pan; cook 1 minute, stirring occasionally. Combine rice and salt; serve seitan mixture over rice. Garnish with cilantro sprigs, if desired. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: about 1½ cups seitan stir-fry and ½ cup rice).

CALORIES 474; **FAT** 10g (sat 0.8g, mono 4.6g, poly 3.5g); **PROTEIN** 35.5g; **CARB** 60.7g; **FIBER** 9.9g; **CHOL** 0mg; **IRON** 5.3mg; **SODIUM** 818mg; **CALC** 57mg

Umami ingredients

Umami's savory, meaty, sometimes salty taste is concentrated in certain foods, like Roquefort (and other aged cheese), sweet potatoes (and potatoes in general), soy sauce, walnuts, and mushrooms such as porcini, shiitakes, and portobellos. Other umami-rich vegetarian foods include the following:

- Edamame (green soybeans)
- Carrots
- Tomatoes and tomato sauce
- Corn
- Chinese cabbage
- Miso
- Balsamic vinegar
- Broccoli

SIMPLE ADDITIONS

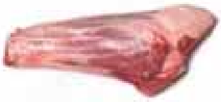
Lamb Shanks Braised with Tomato

Meltingly tender shanks and their simple yet rich sauce make a hearty meal. Serve with polenta.

Directions: Heat a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Sprinkle lamb with ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper. Add lamb to pan, and cook 4 minutes on each side or until browned. Remove from pan. Add garlic to pan; sauté 15 seconds. Add wine; cook 2 minutes, scraping pan to loosen browned bits. Stir in tomatoes; cook 2 minutes. Return lamb to pan. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 1 hour. Turn lamb over; simmer 1 hour or until meat is done and very tender. Place lamb on a plate; cover loosely with foil. Skim fat from surface of the sauce. Bring to a boil; cook 10 minutes or until thickened. Return lamb to pan; cook 4 minutes or until lamb is thoroughly heated. Stir in parsley. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 1 shank and ¾ cup sauce).

CALORIES 254; **FAT** 11.4g (sat 4.8g, mono 4.8g, poly 0.8g); **PROTEIN** 25.9g; **CARB** 11.7g; **FIBER** 3.5g; **CHOL** 89mg; **IRON** 2.9mg; **SODIUM** 439mg; **CALC** 64mg

THE 5 INGREDIENTS



4 (12-ounce) lamb shanks, trimmed

+

4 garlic cloves, minced

+

¾ cup dry red wine

+

2 (14.5-ounce) cans diced tomatoes with basil, garlic, and oregano

+

¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

SIMPLE ADDITIONS

Roasted Cornish Hens with Cherry-Port Glaze

Ginger gives the sweet-tart glaze a little bite.

THE 5 INGREDIENTS

½ cup cherry preserves

+

½ cup port

+

1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger

+

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

+

2 (1½-pound) Cornish hens

Directions: Preheat oven to 400°. Place a wire rack on a baking sheet; coat rack with cooking spray. Combine preserves, port, ginger, vinegar, and ¼ teaspoon salt in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil; cook 9 minutes or until slightly thickened, stirring occasionally. Remove and discard giblets and necks from hens. Rinse hens with cold water; pat dry. Remove skin; trim excess fat. Working with 1 hen at a time, tie ends of legs together with twine. Lift wing tips up and over back; tuck under hen. Sprinkle evenly with ¼ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper. Set on wire rack on baking sheet. Bake at 400° for 15 minutes. Brush hens with cherry mixture; bake 40 minutes or until a thermometer inserted in the meaty part of thigh registers 165°, brushing with cherry mixture every 10 minutes. Remove from oven. Let stand 5 minutes. Remove twine; split hens in half lengthwise. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: ½ hen).

CALORIES 277; **FAT** 4.9g (sat 1.3g, mono 1.8g, poly 1.2g); **PROTEIN** 29.4g; **CARB** 27.5g; **FIBER** 0.1g; **CHOL** 133mg; **IRON** 1.3mg; **SODIUM** 394mg; **CALC** 22mg

SIMPLE ADDITIONS

Beer-Battered Fish and Chips

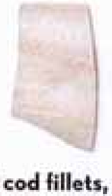
Use Alaskan cod in this dish. Serve with malt vinegar.

Directions: Preheat oven to 450°. Combine fish and ¼ cup beer in a medium bowl. Cover and chill for 1 hour. Place potatoes on a jelly-roll pan coated with cooking spray. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon oil, and sprinkle with ¼ teaspoon salt; toss well. Bake at 450° for 20 minutes or until browned and crisp, stirring after 10 minutes. Drain fish; discard liquid. Sprinkle fish with ¼ teaspoon salt. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine remaining ¾ cup beer, flour, and ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper in a medium bowl. Add fish to beer mixture, tossing gently to coat. Heat remaining 3 tablespoons oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Remove fish from bowl, shaking off excess batter. Add fish to pan; cook 3 minutes or until browned. Turn fish over; cook 3 minutes or until done. Sprinkle fish with ¼ teaspoon salt. Serve immediately with chips. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: about 4 ounces fish and about ½ cup chips).

CALORIES 398; **FAT** 15g (sat 1.1g, mono 8.4g, poly 4.6g); **PROTEIN** 24.6g; **CARB** 40.7g; **FIBER** 2.2g; **CHOL** 40mg; **IRON** 2.4mg; **SODIUM** 524mg; **CALC** 30mg

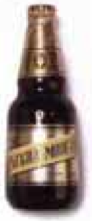
—Recipes by David Bonom and Maureen Callahan

THE 5 INGREDIENTS



1 pound cod fillets, cut into 3-inch pieces

+



1 cup dark beer (such as Negra Modelo), divided

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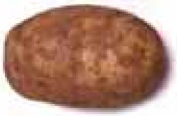

1 pound baking potatoes, cut into (¼-inch) strips

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¼ cup canola oil, divided

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3.38 ounces all-purpose flour (about ¾ cup)

Our favorite Macadamia Butter Cookies

A fresh-baked batch of these nut- and fruit-studded treats is sure to bring good cheer. RECIPE BY LORRIE HULSTON CORVIN

2/3 cup macadamia nuts
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 large egg
5.6 ounces all-purpose flour (about 1 1/4 cups)
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 cup sweetened dried cranberries, chopped
1 tablespoon granulated sugar

1. Preheat oven to 375°.

2. Place nuts in a food processor; process until smooth (about 2 minutes), scraping sides of bowl once. Combine macadamia butter, ½ cup granulated sugar, and brown sugar in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at medium speed. Add vanilla and egg; beat well.

3. Weigh or lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine flour, baking soda, salt, and nutmeg, stirring with a whisk. Add flour mixture to sugar mixture; beat at low speed just until combined (mixture will be very thick). Stir in cranberries. Chill 10 minutes.

4. Divide chilled dough into 30 equal portions; roll each portion into a ball. Place 1 tablespoon granulated sugar in a small bowl. Lightly press each ball into sugar; place each ball, sugar side up, on a baking sheet covered with parchment paper. Gently press the top of each cookie with a fork. Dip fork in water; gently press top of each cookie again to make a crisscross pattern. Place 15 cookies on each of 2 baking sheets.

5. Bake cookies, 1 baking sheet at a time, at 375° for 9 minutes or until golden. Remove cookies from pan; cool on a wire rack. Repeat procedure with remaining cookies. Yield: 30 servings (serving size: 1 cookie).

CALORIES 78; **FAT** 2.5g (sat 0.4g, mono 1.8g, poly 0.1g); **PROTEIN** 1g; **CARB** 13.5g; **FIBER** 0.5g; **CHOL** 7mg; **IRON** 0.4mg; **SODIUM** 44mg; **CALC** 7mg